The Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs

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THE RETURN OF SAINT FRANCIS

UNDER the presidency of the Very Reverend Thomas Plassman, president of St. Bonaventure's Seminary, the seventeenth annual meeting of the Franciscan Educational Conference will be held at the monastery of Mary Immaculate, Garrison, New York, during the first week in July. Delegates representing communities both of the Friars Minor and the Capuchins will assemble from nearly all parts of the country. And it is of deep importance that the main subject of this year's meeting of the educational leaders of the Franciscans will be, "A Program of Social Progress." This significance would be attached to the deliberations of these theologians, sociologists and contemplatives, even were their efforts to be restricted to the seminarians and the pupils of the multitude of educational institutions under Franciscan direction. But when it is remembered that what is taught in the Franciscan classrooms overflows not only into Franciscan pulpits, and thus influences great masses of the Catholic public, but also that it will provide the standards of practical action and the ideals to be followed by the Third Order of St. Francis in the United States, the really vast influence of the coming conference may be justly appreciated. For it is now becoming clear to those who are aware of the non-sensational movements of Catholic Action, which often are far more profound and lasting than the movements which attract great publicity, that the Third Order of St. Francis in the United States has outgrown the character of an experiment and has taken on the proportions of a great movement. And in estimating the value, both to the Church and the nation, of this movement, it should be remembered that Pope Leo XIII, the Pontiff who initiated the modern Catholic effort to apply the immutable principles of the Christian religion to the solution of the economic problems of our age

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of social crisis, said that "My Social Reform is the Third Order."

Father Maximus Poppy, O. F. M., the secretary of the National Executive Board of the Third Order, has issued a survey of the Third Order which he has recently completed as part of a larger work. The figures given by this survey of the growth of the Third Order are illuminating. During the last fourteen years, since 1921, the fraternities in the United States have increased from 390 to 975. The membership has grown during the same period from 75,516 to 93,961. The fraternities are to be found in one hundred dioceses. How far this Franciscan movement has become general, a great influence permeating the whole Church in our country, is shown by the fact that nearly 70 percent of the fraternities, bound by the rules of the Third Order of St. Francis, are under the direction of diocesan clergy, and of the clergy of other religious orders. It is thus a veritable return of the spirit of Saint Francis himself. For everything that Francis did, and all that he hoped to do, both through his friars, and the nuns of Saint Clare, and his Third Order, was primarily meant for the good of the Church as a whole, and for the world, through that Church. Saint Francis rescued the society of his time through the work of his friars, his nuns, and his vast following among the laity associated in the Third Order, and pledged to base their immensely fruitful labors for the regeneration of the world upon the three Christian principles of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Third Order of today is being rejuvenated to carry on the same work, in the same spirit, though in ways appropriate to the special problems of today.

As the *Third Order Forum,* in its issue for May, puts the matter: "Nothing can adequately meet the spirit of mischief abroad in the world today but a purposeful reconsecration of ourselves to the threefold Gospel spirit of poverty, chastity and obedience. That threefold spirit . . . is, as Pius XI points out so tellingly, precisely the spirit and the vocation of the Third Order. . . . It was with such thought in mind that the Third Order was founded in the first place. For what actuated Saint Francis was the aim to give people in the world a rule at the guidance of which they could, in their own station in the world, follow as closely as possible the ideal which was sending so many unattached men and women into the ranks of the Friars Minor and the Poor Ladies of St. Clare. Only, at that time the ideal was taken seriously by those who joined the Third Order. To them it was taking leave of one way of living and giving welcome to a new spirit and program. It was not just having a cord and garment hung about them, for the rest leaving themselves undisturbed in the pursuit of every worldly whim that might hitherto have actuated them."

It is this devotion to their ideals which is increasing and giving real power to the men and women of the Third Order in America. Not that their wise directors, heirs of the experience of seven centuries of Franciscanism, expect all, or the majority, of the members to be saints all at once. "The Order is a school of virtue," says the *Forum.* "But virtue is achieved as virtue not through coercion but through free choice. That kind of virtue alone will give the Third Order of today the power it once had."

Moreover, this power is not intended to be "aggressive," or "militant," in the common meaning of those terms. The Third Order works today, as it did in Saint Francis's age, through the penetration of society, by the ferment of a personal and corporate example of practical Christian living. That there should be a body of Catholic men and women, grouped together throughout the land, following Saint Francis in this return of his own spirit of self-sacrifice, sanctity and Christian love, is a sign full of hope for the future of social justice.

Week by Week

WHEN this issue went to press the NRA decision had by no means been digested by anyone in the country—not even Wall Street.

The Supreme Court Decision

Although NRA was surrounded in the administration program by other much publicized and highly important political elements—such as relief, banking, T.V.A., utility holding, labor disputes—nevertheless it, together with the A.A.A., were the agencies which could furnish an individual quality to the Roosevelt presidency. It was really experimental and possessed enormous potential power for changing America. It changed from the idea of setting up objective laws and permitting freedom under the law to a more organic conception which tended, evidently, to blur the edges between private custom and law, administration and legislation; it created a conductor by which the impulses of individuals in their economic life carried immediately and visibly through the industry they worked in, and it assumed that these impulses had a public character and that individuals were, in some measure at least, accountable for them. This economic integration, this penetration of responsibility and rules into a field which eighteenth-century democratic theory considered sovereign to the individual, was a rude tool which undoubtedly had some danger of being molded into a Fascist axe, but which, we believe, could have been refined into the beginnings of a func-

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tional, economic democracy which is desperately needed to fill the void now too apparent in our republican political form.

THE LABOR lobbies were the first to rally, lining up with renewed energy behind the Black thirty-hour bill, the Guffey coal bill and the Wagner trade-disputes bill. Detailed and mandatory laws are obviously necessary for protections hoped for from the outlawed codes. The congressional docket has rarely been so full in such hot weather. Industrial and financial leaders who so light-heartedly cheered the unanimous frown of the Supreme Court may find that the place of NRA is taken by a whole volume of congressional legislation which will be much less flexible and far more difficult to circumvent than rules about pulling chickens out of coops. Before the Schechter debacle the list of "must" legislation was undoubtedly withering in the summer heat. Favorite bills were nicely balanced in the two houses of Congress and the parliamentary situation indicated that the President might very likely get his desired bills—such as NRA extension and utility holding company limitation and A.A.A. development—through Congress quickly. Now the administration must spray its shot if it wants to preserve some semblance of a New Deal. We believe that the tendency to emphasize recovery rather than reform will be more pronounced in the immediate future and that Congress will split more and more widely into the reformers and the hopefuls. The Supreme Court held off its decision until the argument in favor of the NRA based on the emergency lost its acute emotional appeal. The New Deal at least brought enough orderliness to the depression to permit its chief measure to die in relative calm.

THE INCREASE of interest in adult education is one of the boons of the painful period through which we all have been passing, it was said at the meeting of the American Association for Adult Education recently held in Milwaukee. That good things can come from hardship is not a new observation on the curious way in which things do work themselves out. The converse of this proposition also has ample justification in fact, if we consider the Sybarite as the type who does himself injury by the very act of being able to indulge himself in every luxury. Statistics, that modern rash which erupts in almost all attempts at factual reporting, were given galore to show that adults were seeking the cultivation of their minds as an antidote to the anxieties and poverties of the immediate past and present. One speaker who has been conducting classes in New York City's poorest and most congested section, told of the marvelous responsiveness of his students, their eagerness for cultural opportunities and their touching idealism. Given half a chance they would, he believed, themselves be agents of the finest kind of Americanization, a brightening up of the corner where we are, without any artificial and sometimes dubious campaign applied from what supposed itself to be the top. The director of the association expressed his personal opinion, from wide observation, that the idea of the school as an agency for social action was giving place rapidly to the idea that the school should be an agency of preparation for social action; that is, experiences of life, experiences of justice and injustice in the specific rather than the abstract, will principally mold public belief and the underlying urge, or necessity, for social action, and this in turn should be based on a broad understanding of the residual values of human experience through the ages. To Catholics this is all very interesting and has a very familiar ring.

Education for Action

THE MATTER of women's business and professional careers has been discussed from the most widely divergent viewpoints ever since those careers have been a fact. It is not likely that enough wisdom will ever be granted to any merely human judge to enable him to decide between all the varying considerations—economic freedom of women, economic competition between the sexes, the gain in social and technical competence, the loss in potential wifehood and motherhood. No one, probably, will ever be able to say what is the resultant of all these forces, and hence whether feminine careers, viewed as an extensive phenomenon, are more an asset or a liability. However, there is one recurring note struck in this argument which, in fairness, should receive its answer every time it is sounded. Mr. Arthur Brisbane is the latest to sound it, according to news reports of his recent speech to a group of women fashion workers. He is said to have advised them to quit their jobs, marry, and have large families, thereby doing the "only important work" possible to women. If this is sincerely meant as practical advice, Mr. Brisbane should follow it with a blueprint showing ways and means. Some few women, of course, decide from the first against marriage and children. But most women adopt careers because they must. That they may be successful and happy as careerists, or that careers may gradually disincline a proportion of them for motherhood, does not affect the fact that the economic and social pattern definitely puts the majority of them into positions where they must support themselves, and often help others. This majority has almost no power to choose marriage at the outset of their careers. In our social order,

Why They Don't Marry

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marriage is simply not forthcoming for them then; and if they give themselves seriously to their immediate problem, of self-support, it means that for a definite fraction of them, marriage automatically becomes less likely later. To talk by implication as though the great number of feminine careerists were simply indulging a hobby, or making a wilfully anti-social choice, is to betray a very limited knowledge of women.

"The Case of Arthur Kraus"

A MAN in New York City has become entangled in fantastic and sinister circumstances which have closed in about him as the horrors of a refined mystery story engulf the fictional protagonist. It is "The Case of Arthur J. I. Kraus," a professor and political refugee from Poland, who came to this country when forced out of his homeland for protesting the persecution of minorities, and taught at the College of the City of New York until he was dismissed in January, 1933. The month before that Dr. Kraus had gone on a week's hunger strike to arouse interest in the plight of students in Poland. He was dicharged after returning to work because, it was said, he was "erratic, eccentric, and mentally abnormal." This accusation was made without formal examination, and in spite of the fact that eminent psychologists have since then attested that he is sound mentally and emotionally, the charge has not been repudiated and Dr. Kraus has not found a new job. Finally, he is faced with deportation because, being without a position, he threatens to become a public charge. There is now a race between the deportation proceedings and his suits against City College and its officials which are pending in the New York Supreme Court. Dr. Kraus feels persecuted again in this country for his continued idealistic protest in favor of liberalism.

Precedent in Kansas

"IT IS not raining rain for me, it's raining violets." So Kansans seem currently to be singing, at least in spirit, if one may judge from newspaper stories — nature having caught up with art, according to its custom, and furnished an illustration of the song by blessing that state with the heaviest rainfall it has enjoyed in years. Hearts and purse-strings were loosed by such a shower as Meredith must have had in mind in his celebrated poem about the waterspouts; and as a result, all sorts of last-minute-of-the-last-act things have come to pass. We do not dwell on the more congruous data, such as the 300-percent increase in farm implement sales, or the closing of seventy-four farm purchases. But when one reflects that, in direct sequence upon the record precipitation of moisture, sixty-seven petitions for divorce have been withdrawn, church attendance has doubled, salary increases for school teachers were voted in seventeen of the more saturated towns, and Dodge City, in the heart of the downfall, decided to establish a two-year junior college, one realizes that rainwater is good for other things besides the complexion. Perhaps the authorities in control of the weather should extend this experiment, varying the meteorological benefactions according to the diverse wants of our nation's communities.

Our Next War

PERHAPS one of our best-edited and best-looking contemporaries among magazines here in the United States, the *Living Age,* has had as remarkable a prescience as there could be found by hindsight: that is, by taking a magazine and computing its analyses of coming events and comparing them, when the events had in time come about or not, with the forecasts. It is with considerable respect then, that we have followed for some time in the *Living Age* the run of premonitions disclosed there that trouble in Europe is chronic; a hundred years from now, a thousand from now, it may be different in superficial aspects but not in kind from what it is now, as during the last hundred years there were Metternich, Kulturkampfs, Nazis of the day, and Communists and contra-Communists, suffering bystanders and whoopers-uppers, by others names of course; just as there were a thousand years ago, and so on. What the *Living Age,* however, foresees as the outstanding historical event likely to transpire in our times and, though the single most impressive event, likely not to be settled definitely in our twentieth century, is the emergence of Japanese hegemony in the Orient, countered fiercely and very naturally by the forces of the British Empire, and by the United States maybe. The maybe about the United States is the most important point. Number 10 Downing Street has been turning on the tides of oratory for hands across the Atlantic and guns across the Pacific, opposed, of course, by Japanese efforts to apply the same empire-building tactics which the Japanese learned from their former ally. If anyone is so simple as to think this is all a *cauchemar,* he would be well advised to read the June *Living Age.* The editor, Quincy Howe, formerly of the *Atlantic Monthly,* is about as far the opposite of a jingo as one could hope to find. Where justice, aside from self-interest, lies for the United States, is something which jingoes and which very shrewd *agents provocateurs* will be seeking more and more from now on to obscure from the view of the intelligent and active element of the United States public. Even a little realistic knowledge will increase rapidly in importance.

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CONCLUSIONS ON MEXICO[1]

By CHARLES S. MACFARLAND

Dr. Macfarland, one of the most influential of American Protestant clergymen, is the general secretary emeritus of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. His testimony as to the denial of religious liberty in Mexico and the reality of religious persecution, based upon personal investigation, is part of a forthcoming book which should do much to enlighten public opinion in the United States. This review, of course, cannot endorse all his statements concerning the Catholic Church.—The Editors.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH declares that the State is persecuting the Church and suppressing, not only its liberties, but also those of the people. The Secretary of Foreign Relations and the Mexican Ambassador to the United States repeatedly deny by press and radio that there is any such oppression, although they do not go very far in attempting to disprove specific charges of the Church.

Without doubt the representatives of the Mexican State mean to convey something like this: The individual in Mexico may choose his own creed, he may think about religion, may pray, may worship in the inviolable solitude of personality, without any hindrance. The State has not attempted to touch the Church creed as such. President Cárdenas stated it in this way: "Government action only endeavors to enforce exact compliance with the laws in force regulating religious worship." This is a somewhat disingenuous answer in view of the fact that the laws and regulations which are the instruments of the alleged persecution and suppression of liberty have been enacted or are employed for that purpose.

The response of the Church is substantially this: The State has taken away from the worshiper the means essential to him by which, through tradition and custom established from childhood, substantiated by the impulsions of conscience, he may express his worship, confess his sins, profess his repentance and be the recipient of divine grace. His marriage is to him a sacrament, and in the face of death he feels the need of the ministries of the Church, as elements in his creed.

Now that does not mean to me, as a Protestant, or to my Protestant readers, what it does to the plain man and woman in Mexico, and we must try to think of it in their language. I have profound respect for a sincere Catholic and these things are essential to *his* religious liberty. He wants liberty to have a priest for his confession, for his Sacrament, for the last rites of the dying and dead in his bereaved home. The exercise of his freedom requires the offices of Church and priest. This is the "creed" of his Church and of his personal religion.

The State, therefore, when it declares that the laws do not interfere with his "creed," is in grievous error.

Señor Portes Gil, at that time President of the Republic, said on one occasion:

> I am glad to take advantage of this opportunity to declare publicly and very clearly that it is not the purpose of the Constitution *nor of the laws,* nor of the government of the republic, to destroy the identity of the Catholic Church or of any other, *or to interfere in any way with its spiritual functions.*

If that is the question at issue, then there can be but one opinion. There are two matters on which, as an objective and candid narrator, I am obligated to be more than a mere fact-finder, regardless of the consequences. The State is interfering with the "spiritual functions" of the Church and of the Catholic worshiper. *The State is suppressing religious liberty,* when it closes the worshiper's church, when it deprives him of his priest, when it shuts out religion from his home, both as teaching and as ministration. It suppresses religious liberty to the Church as an institution, not only by these same restraints, but by its destruction of the Church's identity and by the demolition of its organization.

Article 24 of the Constitution reads:

> Everyone is free to embrace the religion of his choice and to practise all ceremonies, devotions or observances of his respective creed, either in places of public worship or at home, provided they do not constitute an offense punishable by law.

This can hardly have been intended as anything but a bill of rights. But the present government is employing the closing words of this article of the Constitution as what is termed a "joker," in such a manner as to completely nullify it. Such use of the last clause as is now being made of it makes the Constitution subject to the whim of every succeeding legislature. Thus, when President Cárdenas declares that in religious matters the State is but carrying out the Constitution, all he means is that the one article which guarantees religious liberty nullifies that freedom at the same time. One can hardly conceive of anything more specious than the sophistry of the Mexican government in this connection.

[1] This is an extract from "Chaos in Mexico." New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.00.

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The next question at issue is, does the State persecute the Church? The word "persecution," according to the dictionary, means "to pursue in a manner to injure or inflict, to harrow, to inflict cruel or oppressive treatment." Is the State injuring, inflicting, harrowing or oppressing the Church?

Is not that question answered sufficiently when I pass the beautiful cathedral and find flaming posters of the State plastered on its walls attacking it in violent terms as an institution, or when I go into a church and find it filled with cartoons, some of them vile caricatures of religion itself? Is it not answered when the government goes into the cathedral, makes trash heaps of altars and crucifixes, and pastes seals on its paintings of the Madonnas and in the church offices on the typewriters, certifying that they are the property of the government? Is it not answered when the Red Shirts, even though not authorized, are permitted to invade Church property in riotous manner? It is idle to discuss this question. Even a hasty review of this volume makes it perfectly clear that *the Mexican State is persecuting the Church.* For the Foreign Secretary and the Ambassador to the United States to reiterate denials is as disingenuous as it is inept.

But, of course, that is not the whole story. One might even state the brief for the Mexican government better than it has done for itself. It does not appear to have thought its case through with sufficient penetration to state it convincingly.

If an institution misuses liberty, it forfeits its right to freedom to such a degree as may be necessary to prevent injury to human welfare, and to the extent of its misuse.

A reliable Roman Catholic writer admits that some of the political activities of the priests have been "questionable," and that there have been periods of "widespread deterioration" in the priesthood. Again, we hardly need to take time discussing this question. There is a good deal in the claim of the State that the Church has forfeited its right to liberties which it has claimed and to powers which formerly it exercised. But the State has little sense of perspective and has not attempted to make any discrimination as to just what immunities should be taken away. It has left almost none of the essential rights. The government makes its own definition of political interference. It rules out any right of the Church or priest to criticize the government, or any law, or to advocate any law. It would be cause for great regret if the Church should regain the temporal power to which it had no justifiable claim, but if it does so as the result of the reaction of the opinions of mankind to the intolerance of the State, it will be the fault of the latter body. The policies of the government are amateurish and almost childish. They are very frequently carried out with a playful sarcasm or a hilarious insolence which is entirely gratuitous. Archbishop Díaz is in every way as much of a gentleman as Señor Portes Gil, and that is saying a good deal. The Archbishop's arrest on a lonely road in the middle of the night, his long detention and the treatment which accompanied it (on the absurd charge that he was suspected of carrying a machine gun in his car) ought to have brought forth, as I had expected it would, an apology from some gentleman in the government. In my opinion, the representatives of the Mexican government are, to say the least, poor sportsmen. Any honest and courageous referee would rule them off the floor. While undoubtedly there are sincere men in the Cabinet, there is neither sincerity nor sanity in government procedure.

When, moreover, we come to consider the individual Mexican Roman Catholic, he has not, with relatively few exceptions, forfeited his right to liberty. The State, in its institutional attack, has made no effort whatever to preserve his freedom. It has appeared to seek retaliation rather than justice. It has been, to some degree, punishing men, and in too large measure, for the misdeeds of their more or less ancient ancestors or predecessors.

One could also wish that the Mexican government would express its moral indignation more frequently to those not of the Church, but of the State itself, to men whose misdemeanors cry out to the heavens. And at this point I would raise the question as to how far the State's attitude to the religious convictions of its own employees is a suppression of both civil and religious liberty.

That the Church has been fanatical goes without saying, but now we have precisely the same sort of irrationalism, almost to the point of mania, in State circles. In fact, the government suffers through the boisterous demeanor of some of its representatives as contrasted with the dignity and restraint of the Archbishop of Mexico. There are departmental buildings where intolerance is in the very atmosphere.

The Mexican State imperils its efforts for social justice in one realm of the human social order when it does injustice in another. Even when its aims in curtailing the power of the Church are right, its measures are often completely wrong on two counts—they are both unjust and unnecessary. It is a contradiction so plain that the most unlearned may see it—to tell a man he may have religious liberty while preventing him from exercising it by his own forms, rites and ceremonies, provided these injure no one else.

Perhaps it is appropriate that the Constitution of 1917, which is now in force, not only deletes from the previous Constitution the phrase "in the name of God" but also that which followed

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it in the earlier document, "by the authority of the Mexican people." While no one will claim that the Catholic census in Mexico represents the practising membership of the Church, nevertheless we know perfectly well that the present attitude toward the Church is contrary to the will of a majority, probably of at least three-fourths, of the Mexican people.

I do not register the above observations as instructions to my jury of readers, but will leave them to consider them as testimony to be reviewed in the light of the close of this chapter, and especially in view of the claim of the Mexican State that its sole purpose is "the spiritual liberty of the people," and "the forming of a new soul of the nation."

But now a word to the Church which, in behalf of its liberty, is asking support of the adherents of other religions.

The Church cannot ask the world to ignore past history in which its wrong-doing has resulted in injury to the people, especially in view of the fact that it has continued its attitude, in some measure, down to very near the present hour. That the Church is now in a different temper in Mexico appears evident. If this is genuine—and I believe it is on the part of many of the Church dignitaries—the jury should take it into account.

I learn, on Catholic authority, that there are countries, including some in South America, with whose governments the Vatican has concluded concordats, including the guarantees of religious liberty to other religious bodies. It is a pity that such an agreement has not been made with Mexico.

The Church cannot appropriately demand the restoration of its freedom, nor can it ask those outside its fold to do so, unless it is ready to pledge itself to give to others *the same liberty it asks for itself*. It must never again, in Mexico or anywhere else, try to influence either State or people to suppress the liberty of worshipers who would pray in other than Catholic temples. It must not only correct the errors set forth in Señor Portes Gil's indictment, but it should analyze his statement to see how far it is true that it has, in recent years, failed to eradicate superstition, how far it has sought and employed material and temporal, as well as spiritual, weapons; numerous other matters requiring reform will readily suggest themselves. One man, who has rendered great service to the Mexican nation and who is deeply sympathetic with the Church, expressed the opinion to me that had the Roman Catholic Church manifested a real belief in liberty by treating the Protestants justly, it might now be in a position to withstand the threatened suppression of religion. He believed that, by weakening the case of the State, it would have altered the entire situation.

A new spirit is needed in both government and Church, and a new understanding more fundamental than that arranged with the help of Ambassador Morrow. It is time to put a stop to the present clanging of charges and counter-charges. The State should define its socialism, or at least put it in some form of simple principle, and the Church might make its meaning clearer when it condemns what it calls "socialism." I have ventured to request that the Apostolic Delegate convey this suggestion to His Holiness the Pope. . . .

The question as to whether or not Mexico is approaching Fascism or Communism is one in which there is some variety of opinion. So far as religion is concerned, it makes little difference whether Mexico has atheism, as in Russia, or the kind of non-Christian cult which is attempting to make its way in Germany, where National Bishop Mueller recently made Easter in part a memorial of the birthday of Adolf Hitler.

During the early years of the Revolution, although there was a growing popular indifference to the Church and an increasing hostility on the part of the State, there were practically no signs of opposition to religion itself. More than once leaders of the Revolution have, like Hitler in his statement regarding National-Socialism, declared that the movement was fundamentally Christian. When the Church came under criticism later on, those same leaders declared that it was the Church which had become de-Christianized.

As previously recorded, Señor Portes Gil expressed the opinion to me that Article 3 of the Constitution did not imply atheism. How far the present seemingly anti-religious attitude of the government is simply taken because of inability to differentiate between religion and the Roman Catholic Church, it is hard to tell. If these attacks were solely institutional attacks on the Roman Catholic Church as such, one would look for the same sort of consideration for the Protestant Church as previously prevailed. In all probability the issue largely depends on the extent to which communistic principles are adopted. Some informed people believe that the government is really following the Russian path despite its lack of any political relationship with Russia, while others think that the tendency is more in the direction of the new European intellectual ideals. The most we can do at this time is to indicate some things which have either the communistic, or more particularly the atheistic, cast.

When talking with me a man who rendered high service to the nation and to the National Revolutionary party some years ago, called my attention to a newspaper article stating that a proposition had been made to expel all members of churches from the party and to permit no church member to join it. He remarked sadly, "That would rule me out." While in Mexico

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I learned of the expulsion of a member "for having sympathy with religion."

Cristo Rey, a newspaper previously quoted, which imitates the style of Russian journals, carries alongside its front-page title a caricature of Jesus, in an apparently intoxicated condition wearing a crown at a rakish angle, suggestive of ribaldry. When I told Señor Portes Gil that the government was charged with being responsible for the publication, he answered that the allegation was "absolutely false." I have no doubt that he thought he was telling the truth, for there is a good deal of duplicity inside State circles. The right hand of the government often does not know what the left hand is doing. As a matter of fact, however, I found that the street address named in the headline of the paper was but a sub- or pseudo-office and that the paper was printed in and issued from the official printing office of the Department of Agriculture. From that same office are issued some of the hideous cartoons to which reference has been made, and on its walls are posters declaring that the oppressed state of the people is due to "belief in God."

In his essay printed with the imprint of his Cabinet office, Señor Portes Gil does reverent homage to Jesus, refers to Him as "the Master," capitalizes the pronouns in referring to Him, appeals to "the Gospel" of Jesus, declares that "Mexico applauds" elements of "the doctrine" of the Master—while the printing presses of the Department of Agriculture continue to turn out another piece of literature weekly carrying a repulsive representation of Jesus on its headline. The voice sounds like that of Jacob but the hand is that of Esau. Señor Portes Gil had assured me that the Cabinet members shared the same *ideologia.* Evidently this term has considerable amplitude in its circumferential area.

One can stand much of the contradictoriness of Mexican politics, but not quite to the extent of "collective" (to use the oft-employed term) hypocrisy. Nor can one avoid the question as to whether or not the document of the Secretary of Foreign Relations is intended for consumption in the United States, while that issued from the Department of Agriculture is prepared for the edification of the peasants of Mexico.

BACH FESTIVAL AT BETHLEHEM

By JAMES J. WALSH

SOME of my earliest conscious recollections are connected with Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. On the time-table of the railroad that went by our little town, Bethlehem occupied a prominent place, and some of us young folks used to wonder whether this was not the Bethlehem of Juda in which the Lord was born. A little later, in my trips to and from college at Fordham, I was carried through Bethlehem some half-dozen times a year. I remember how the scriptural names of the towns along the railroad, for there are a number of them in this region besides Bethlehem and Nazareth, caught my fancy. I used to see and wonder at some of the quaint old-fashioned garbs worn by the people of the neighborhood so that a rather deep impression was made on me with regard to the region and the folks who lived in it.

I am afraid that most of us who passed through Bethlehem fifty years ago did not take the little town, the capital of the Pennsylvania Dutch as we used to call it, very seriously. It was rather a subject for humor and we were quite ready to retail various jokes that were current with regard to the mode of speech of its inhabitants, who talked a combination of what was called Pennsylvania Dutch and English that was very picturesque to say the least and was sometimes very striking in its mode of expression. A favorite story was that with regard to the good Bethlehemite housekeeper who had secured the installation of one of the earliest of the electric door-bells that came to replace the old knockers and bell-pulls. Her bell got out of order one day, for in those early times electric bells were even less dependable, if possible, than they are now, and she proceeded to post a notice so that callers would not be disappointed by the lack of response to the bell but would knock on the door in order to bring someone to open it. That notice was a triumph of Pennsylvania English-Dutch. It ran: "Button does not bell. Bump!" This was a very expressive formula, my readers will agree I am sure, for the more familiar, "Bell does not ring. Knock." There were any number of other expressions quite as full of quaint humor as this that were retailed with regard to the good folk of Bethlehem.

It was almost the last place in the world where those of us familiar with the Bethlehem of the old days would have expected to find a fine artistic development that would attract the attention of the country and bring the intelligentsia in large numbers. Yet the Bach festival, so successful for all the years of the twentieth century, is deservedly making Bethlehem one of the best known towns of its size in the country. Above all, it is making it very clear that plain and simple folk,

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far from the madding crowd of the large cities, under the influence of great music and deep religious feeling, prove to have in them powers of artistic expression which demonstrate how much human nature has of response to the esthetic. Bach's music and their devotion to it is lifting what seemed to be a quite commonplace, unesthetic people into a position of leadership in esthetics that affords a stimulus to all the world. For the Bach festival at Bethlehem attracts the attention not only of Americans but also of Europeans and has given renewed *kudos* to a great musician, and modern prestige to this supremely great composer that adds a new chapter to the history of music. This year, on May 17-18, in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the great German composer, Bethlehem has been the Mecca and attraction for music lovers more than ever before, a name to conjure with in the musical world.

Bethlehem is accomplishing in the twentieth century in music something very like what that little town in Bavaria, Oberammergau, has been doing for centuries in dramatics. People go from all over the world to see the Passion Play and almost without exception come away with the feeling that they have seen one of the worthwhile things of their generation. It is a never-ending source of surprise that the simple villagers of a country town, which in normal conditions has scarcely more than a thousand inhabitants, should have been able to create such an effective instrument for the expression of their deepest religious and dramatic feeling. Generation after generation, from among the wood-carvers and farmers, merchants and trades people, even laborers of all kinds, a group of men and women have with deep sincerity and skill repeated the story of the tragedy enacted in Jerusalem two thousand years ago. As in Oberammergau so in Bethlehem there is a genuine religious fervor that lifts people up and makes them susceptible to the feelings that are best in their nature as they listen to Bach's great music played and sung by the Bethlehemites. It is because of this more than anything else that people are so deeply touched at both places and go away so thoroughly satisfied with their experience.

Very probably the strangest feature of the festival at Bethlehem is the triumph of musical effort accorded the Mass in B Minor. Bach was himself a Lutheran, yet he was so deeply impressed by the Mass that he wrote for that repetition of Calvary on our altars the sublimest music that has perhaps ever been composed. It is strange to think that such deep inspiration should have come to him from a religious ceremonial in which he himself did not believe. Yet the Mass has provided inspiration to many an unbeliever so compelling that he has come away from it deeply interested in its significance, and often the answers to his questions concerning it have proved the beginning of the road to the Catholic Church. It is the very center of Christian worship and of mystical religion.

Another interesting fact in regard to these Bach festivals at Bethlehem is that their choirmaster was able to find in that neighborhood 250 voices for his choir that render the Bach music in a way in which it has never been done before. Indeed their rendition represents a real development of musical genius and a fine interpretation of great musical scores that reveal the significance of the master's music. The good Bethlehemites have added a new chapter to world music. Here at last Bach has secured something approaching adequate expression. Great symphony organizations, even famous Philharmonic societies, have failed to accomplish what is being done at Bethlehem, and, in the opinion of critics, they have failed almost egregiously because they lack the fervor of spirit and deep religious feeling of the little Pennsylvania town.

The Bach festival at Bethlehem is, above all, interesting to us in the midst of the renewal of interest in medieval studies because it throws so much light on what was accomplished by the people of little towns in various parts of Europe during the Middle Ages. Ordinarily we might be tempted to think that the performances of the morality and mystery plays during the Middle Ages were good enough for the simple unlettered people of those times and places but not at all worthy of a period of education like ours. As a matter of fact, while our larger cities have been trying, spending untold time and money in the effort, to re-create the spirit of music in the hearts of the people of our time, and get them away from the flippancies of modern syncopation, there has come from the little capital of the Pennsylvania Dutch, hidden away in northeastern Pennsylvania, a message which means more than all that is being done by and for the symphony organizations of the great cities throughout the United States.

Human nature has possibilities in this way which, if they are not choked off by the money-making urge, lift people out of the sordid round of every-day life and enable them to appreciate properly and enjoy thoroughly the supremely beautiful things that sometimes are supposed to be properly appreciated only by those who have devoted long years of special mental cultivation for the purpose. Bethlehem and Oberammergau are striking illustrations of the significance of artistic phases of the Middle Ages. To understand them is to appreciate what the Middle Ages accomplished in educating people and developing their esthetic tastes in a way that far surpasses anything that we seem to be able to do in that matter today.

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FOOTBALL'S "VOLUNTEER ALMUNI"

By HERBERT REED

AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE FOOTBALL, which celebrated its sixty-sixth birthday last fall, has definitely weathered the financial depression almost solely through the aid of its "Volunteer Alumni," who, at first grudgingly admitted to college stadia, have returned again and again, at last to be embraced, not alone by the graduate manager, whose job it is to sell tickets, but even by the faculty. It was not so many years ago that any traffic with these Volunteer Alumni was looked upon as the road to ruin. It was held that any college game of such widespread appeal, beset with evils of one sort or another throughout its existence, could never survive a rising tide of "outsider" attendance. Now it is often necessary to hire a "ball park" to accommodate them.

Even without this menace, friend and foe had freely admitted that the tendency toward professionalism, whether disguised in the form of "athletic scholarships" or open payment, and widespread proselyting, laid to the "Old Grad," who was very much in the saddle at the time of issue of the famous "Bulletin 23" of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, might eventually wreck the game.

In recent years we have heard the cry, "Over-emphasis," followed by the slogan, "Give the game back to the boys." Thus the game has gone through a definite series of phases, until at long last it has arrived at perhaps the most interesting of all, that of catering to the general public for its right to exist somewhat in the manner to which it has become accustomed. The next phase, and one that will be watched with equal interest by football men and educators, is that planned by President Conant of Harvard, who seeks in time to supplant gate receipts by assessment and slowly accumulated endowment. But for the moment, even at Harvard the Volunteer Alumni have it.

But it is of the status quo that Father Rice speaks in his indictment of football.[1] Unfortunately it is impossible to endow football with a status quo. The only constant thing about it is its state of flux. Despite that state of flux, however, there are certain imperishable features of the game which I shall try to bring forward in the hope of softening somewhat Father Rice's blanket judgment, he being in this case prosecutor, judge and jury. It is charged that it is incompatible with true education. In what classroom shall the young collegian learn a like lesson in self-discipline; the modesty with which to accept victory; the sturdy fortitude with which to endure defeat; the generous appreciation of the worth of a rival; the self-sacrifice of a team mate; all this under great emotional and physical stress?

That these qualities are taught, learned, and presently displayed in the presence of a large cross-section of the American people, the Volunteer Alumni mentioned above, I believe to be an unmixed blessing. In fact I know it is, for last season, as one season before, some years ago, I cast my lot throughout the big games with the Volunteer Alumni. I gave my press tickets to trustworthy assistants and became myself a Volunteer Alumnus. In that capacity, for instance, I was one of the "dollar-tenners" who carried away the gate at Baker Field to see the wonderful Columbia-Navy game, the stirring Tulane-Colgate affair where the Volunteer Alumni turned out to the tune of 45,000, the Army-Notre Dame battle, which for years has been the show of shows for the Volunteer Alumni, and others. And in the end I considered that my few dollars of what Father Rice calls "financial hand-out" was stingy repayment not merely for what he terms the "emotional work-out" the work of the teams gave me, but for the chance to learn under the best conceivable conditions just what my fellow Americans in this sector were thinking and saying and doing about football—and other things. I recommend the experience to some of my fellow football experts of the press stand who have yet really to "see" a football game. As a result of this experience I was prepared to understand at the season's close the jubilant manner in which Father O'Hara, president of Notre Dame, announced in answer to what was intended to be a slur, "We welcome the Volunteer Alumni." I could understand why that welcome went deeper than mere appreciation of the "financial hand-out." Father O'Hara knew what he was talking about. So did I.

As a result of this contact, which resulted in my interviewing an average of fifty Volunteer Alumni per game, I became aware of a quite simple attitude, and this is it: "We want to see the best prepared and the best matched teams we can find. We know football and can call the quarterback's stuff. We don't care which wins unless we have friends at one institution or the other, or have other sentimental reasons, in which case we'll outroot any undergraduate you ever

[1] "The Football Abuse," by Charles O. Rice, in the May 31 issue of THE COMMONWEAL.

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saw. We know enough about it to cheer in the right places. If some of these boys are poor and are getting an education because they can play good football, it is nothing to us. We know that this is one game that can't be bought. Proselyting and all the rest of it is for the authorities to worry about. What do we know about blocking, tackling and interference? Plenty. Listen. We sit in the end stands where we see the teams coming or going away. We see the holes made, the men taken out on the sweep runs. We face the game as the player faces the game. Why shouldn't we know! Times are tough, but we can scrape up $1.10 or $1.65 for this sort of thing any time. You notice where the scouts sit—with us."

And these are the men—and boys—and girls—whom Dr. Sargent, in the famous Carnegie Bulletin, likened to Caspar of Blenheim. These particular Caspars don't care if the regular Alumni never prosper again to such an extent as to outbid them for tickets.

In a recent address on the crowd mind before the Advertising Club, Ely Culbertson said that any crowd was moved primarily by a sense of justice. He was right. Fair play is the keynote of the crowd that forms the Volunteer Alumni. Following further Culbertson's theory, about one in five in the crowd are leaders. In a football crowd the average is much higher. The football follower, whether he has a background of actual play behind him or not, is an extrovert. Which is why he carries away gates. Cops do not club these Volunteer Alumni. They simply recognize *force majeure* and the presence of that great American asset, sheer good humor. They yield to something that is of the spirit.

So much for the present owners of the game who, I have felt, have been considerably maligned. At the same time that the game has been opened up to such an extent as to reach spectacular heights, it has developed a type of play providing vastly more fun for the players. The evolution of the rules and the instruction has been in the direction of making every man on the team an all-round football player. There is still a vast amount of drill in precision. The late Percy Haughton at Harvard, in the great days of his régime, used "squads East and West" and other military maneuvers. He taught timing with the use of the metronome. Elmer Layden at Notre Dame last fall did a deal of drilling to music. Timing, rhythm—a routine not suited to the mere clod. To those who understand the maneuvers, and they now run into the millions, a hard-fought football game between two closely matched teams is an intellectual pleasure.

Father Rice speaks of his own experience as a student, in which he was threatened with bodily violence by coach, graduate manager and players as a result of his attacks on the game. Today this crusading spirit would be met with a good-natured grin. Which is not to say that in those old days there were not many raffish persons connected with the sport. But the day of what the players themselves call the "dese, dose and dem" coaches are happily past. The modern coach lives in a goldfish bowl. He spends most of his time watching his step. The Volunteer Alumni have come along with the coach to achieve new standards. Occasions may still be cited in which teams that ought to know better have wound up in fist-fights. But these are isolated and are usually due to some local condition.

As to personal emoluments for the players. It runs all the way from concessions in tuition fees, through jobs as janitors, waiters, gymnasium attendants, life-guards at beaches, fraternity managers and the like. This is sometimes under cover, sometimes open. There is absolutely no way in which to prevent a wealthy alumnus from paying the way of a protégé. Only last winter, a group of conservative eastern colleges, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Columbia, Cornell and Dartmouth, formed tentatively what amounted to an Eastern Conference. All of them help their football players to a greater or less extent. They feel, however, that they do it in ways so well understood among themselves that they have much in common. At the same time they promised the game one lasting benefit of real moment. They undertook that certain of their number should meet as early as the first game of the season. This means that not one of them is likely to come through with an unbeaten season. That, and its accompanying raucous ballyhoo in the tabloids and even staid newspapers that should know better, is the real curse of football. Incidentally, in my opinion, a player who has never been on a beaten team has failed to attain to a complete education.

Father Rice says in effect that what is bad in intercollegiate football is bad because it is American, thereby indicting a whole country. I say that much of it is good because it is American. The only way in which football could possibly qualify under Father Rice's austere regimen is by complete self-effacement. That has been tried and failed.

As to the Catholic angle, I honestly believe that it has hardly ever occurred to the players themselves. Catholics go to Protestant colleges, Protestants to Catholic colleges. In my own boyhood in what was then the Annexed District, Fordham enjoyed an esteem among Protestants of the neighborhood that certainly never could have given that institution any inferiority complex. One attended Fordham to work and study, and one still does, unless my latest data are inaccurate. And that with "big time" football notwithstanding. Outside observers are rather

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proud of the Catholic colleges because of their unquestioned Americanism, which I know has come to be looked upon as a drawback in some quarters.

What the non-Catholic expects of the Catholic college, on the few occasions on which he is conscious of it as such, is catholicity all the way through. The mixture that is in racial origins, Pole, Irish, Swede, Norwegian, German, English, yes, and American Indian and Jew, not forgetting Yankee now and then, seems to make a stalwart institution. From long years of observation I can say that it makes a football team that can be beaten but cannot be licked.

We need, in these parlous times, the buoyancy and fresh courage that is always on tap mentally and physically at the Catholic colleges, and if I, a Volunteer Alumnus of many of them, think that football has had its share in this sort of Americanism, I invite any controversialist to make the most of it.

THE HAPPY PROCESS-SERVER

By LORETTA REILLY

HE WAS a very amiable young man with a diploma designating him as a Bachelor of Commercial Science. He had studied psychology, business psychology, applied psychology, ethics, traffic, economics and a peculiar thing called salesmanship. He had been born with an inherent sense of rhythm and timing and a boundless ambition to keep going. He could not get a job where the occult sciences of the diploma were in demand, so he took one where he could apply his native talents. It was not an enviable job. At intervals of five days, he took a conveyance and rode far out into the farming regions and bought stores of potatoes from the farmers. The conveyance was a Model T Ford truck. If judiciously thrown into reverse with proper timing and a quick turn of the wheel, it almost always stopped just short of hitting but, as this amiable young man explained, you can't win all the time.

The job, however, was not without highly diverting compensations. It required but little ingenuity to note the country schoolhouses along the way and to remember those in charge of pretty young teachers. The teachers helped considerably by declaring recess whenever a distinctive klaxon smote the cold, still wintry air. The school children frankly admired him. The farmers thought well of him. The farmers' wives and daughters were devoted to him. The cycle of his visits was carefully noted. The best tablecloth and a three-layer cake were in readiness and there were quick trips to the preserve cellar for cucumber chunks and pickled pears, prompted by the worry and concern that this amiable young man might not make out on eggs and cheese and baked beans; creamed codfish, salmon, sardines and other abstinential tidbits were laid by against his coming on Fridays, for this young man had a name that sounded Catholic.

But there is a call of the white collar just as certainly as there is a call of the wild. He picked his mother up and ran all around the house with her the day his ward leader secured an assignment for him in the sheriff's office. The jubilant appointee asked no questions. He kissed the Model T square on the flat radiator cap as a gesture of farewell. He discarded his sheepskin coat, fur cap and gloves and appeared as the correctly attired city chap for his first day on the job. Inside his coat was his badge which had been given a coat of gold-wash as a consummate touch of swank and it was with difficulty that he was persuaded to wear it concealed. Effort was also made to convince him that an attaché of the sheriff's office is not received with conspicuous cordiality in our better circles, but his ardor had made him impervious to suggestion.

In the old job men really liked him and paid a certain deference to his higher education and training. Here where he unaccountably expected to be among his equals, if not his betters, the first crude slap in the face sent him reeling. At first he was puzzled; hurt, scornful. Then the old fight asserted itself. Lastly the old grin came back and the job was licked.

There were no hours in this new job. The duties enumerated in his oath of office were a mere shadow of the job itself. To the popular mind a sheriff's badge suggests a power of the keys of unlimited range and all demoralizing, misbegotten goings-on are dutifully reported even though this official may be powerless to loose or to bind. Men approached him to fix it up with their wives, usually after a good drinking bout. Women who disliked their neighbors were popping in at odd hours. "And I had eleven pairs of black socks on the line and she took one of each pair. I can prove she has them because I have the mates."

As the depression became deeper and blacker, all the grief of the world beat like violent, bitter waves against the sheriff's office, deep, searing humiliation, chicanery, pitiful deception and recriminations. Possessions, the philosophers tell us, are to be held lightly and relinquished with-

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out rancor. To furnish mankind with a civil service examination in this branch of the service must have been the purpose of the inspired writers of conditional sales contracts. Printed in small type, they tempted the hypnotized buyer to hasten on to the readily discernible dotted line. Only after the payments languished did one fatal clause rise out of the fine print like sunflowers out of a close-cropped lawn: "And said article shall remain the property of the seller, etc."

Pianos were early practise targets for skill in losing without rancor. With a warehouse filled with pianos, mute and inglorious, it is certainly stern, fanatical devotion to principle which makes the seller replevin still another. It is very difficult to make a woman with a limited knowledge of English and none at all of legal terminology understand that the piano upon which she has paid $475 earned in the early morning hours scrubbing office floors, will now be taken away because she cannot pay the remaining $25. It is not that anyone in the house plays it or that art will be better served in her front room than in a rat-infested warehouse; it is not that the instrument is worth half the purchase price. It represents a possession to her mind. She has slaved for it. It is her's and she fights for it.

Four deputies had already expounded this losing without rancor theory but the piano was still on the upper landing. The fifth deputy appeared to be making some progress for the savage light had died out of the woman's eyes and she seemed convinced. The young man started downstairs to summon the truckmen who had been betting on him when the woman, regretting her belated conversion, made her renunciation swift and complete. She pushed the piano off the landing and it might have encountered the amiable young man had he not been born with a sense of rhythm and timing. The truckmen deftly sorted the splinters, this the landlord's balustrade, that the replevined piano, and drove to the warehouse.

The depression slunk in sickening progression from replevin, attachment, execution of judgments to foreclosures. Of all earthly possessions, "A house that has done what a house should do," is probably the most difficult to relinquish.

It was very hard to tell how the rather dull son of a dirt-farmer had persuaded an alert city investor to lend him money to buy an auto truck and accept as security a mortgage on the run-down, sand farm from which sufficient harvest could never be garnered to pay the interest on the investment. The alert investor, however, had been so persuaded and now he was foreclosing not only the mortgage on the house and land but the chattel mortgage on the furniture which he had taken as an additional precaution. He did not want the farm or the Greek-temple farmhouse or its poor, carefully preserved furniture of interest to no one but the frugal owners or a genuine antiquarian, which the investor positively was not. He would merely turn the key possessively in the century-old lock to teach the hicks a lesson. Later when billed for the delinqent taxes he might reflect that rural education came high, but that time had not yet arrived.

The husband was senile and rather enjoyed the excitement of the foreclosure sale and the eviction. It was after all the home of his wife's family, her dowry. She, however, understood everything very clearly and accepted it with dignity and calmness. She was one of those women whose tidiness seems to be a spiritual quality which has seeped through the soul and permeated the body. Her thin white hair was severely parted center and gathered into a little old lady's knot at the neck. Her skin, drawn tight over forehead and cheekbones, was a beautiful ivory and unmarred. Her small hands were work-hardened but shapely. Her compact little body was enveloped in the most worn and faded and threadbare of calico wrappers, clean and starched, and over it she had a fresh white apron with wide strings.

She assisted in removing certain articles which the young man from the sheriff's office said were not covered by the mortgage: the family Bible, personal photographs and postcard views of Niagara Falls. Together they went to the attic where both entered upon a voyage of exploration. There was a spinning-wheel, a candle mold and broken toys of early manufacture.

In a cigar-box cradle she discovered a home-made doll fashioned from a corn-cob. It crumbled in her hands. "My grandmother made it for me when I was a little tyke."

The young man looked down at her gently. "His Mother stood beneath the Cross," kept running through his mind, but he spoke in the vernacular of his age: "You're swell to take it on the chin like this."

And yet in all this storm of grief, occasional high comedy shone like a lighthouse on a bleak coast. There was an afternoon when a bridge was in progress on Onderdonk Boulevard, in the new development beyond the ravine. The hostess of a garishly new bungalow was giving a bridge. She was the wife of an unemployed bootlegger and characterized by those of her set as a Good Egg. The other seven players in the living-room were her friends. Beyond the archway in the dining-room the table was set for refreshments, and in the kitchen there was a cake in the oven. There would also be highballs.

The doorbell rang just as her partner got the bid for four no-trump and the hostess answered. The bidder looked at her dummy hand, licked her lips with a killer's delight and garnered her first trick. Then the blow fell.

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"Girls," said the hostess, "add up your scores. The party's off. Our Larries and Panties is going for a ride. In other words, the sheriff wants the furniture."

"You may play out your hand, Madam," said the amiable young man with a formidable legal document in his hand. "The truckmen can begin with the bedroom. Then you may have your refreshments in the dining-room while they are clearing out the living-room and the kitchen."

The Good Egg appreciated his consideration and when the cake was ready she cut two extra pieces and mixed two extra drinks.

"Drink?"

"After Easter," said the amiable young man, departing with his teeth sunk in the third piece of delectable cake.

"You're dumb like a fox," she called after him, placing the rejected glass in the eager hands of the truckman, who from subsequent reports immediately assumed a stellar rôle.

"And I never knowed a thing until I 'flew through the air with the greatest of ease' and landed on soft ground with the truck and the furniture at the bottom of the ravine. And when I goes around to the skirt that replevied the stuff, expecting the roars out of her would deefen, she says, 'Hair offen the dog that bitcha?' and gives me a highball and asks me do I want to know where I can get another truck cheap. Ain't that the payoff?"

The truckman had never studied psychology, and therefore would not understand why the husband's former mistress and the Good Egg were both satisfied to have the furniture at the bottom of the ravine.

And the amiable young man who had studied psychology, business psychology, applied psychology and ethics, sighed for the days when he "hooped" potatoes over Pokapetal Ridge.

So Strange a Thing

Out of the dark it came,
In the deepest hour and most desolate—
Like a descendent flame.

So strange a thing I heard:
Silence was shattered. . . . Song fell consummate
From the throat of a bird!

The prairie grasses lay
Harsh to my cheek. The prairie stars swung cool
And still and far away.

And out of the listening dark:
Quite unafraid and wholly beautiful—
The cry of a lark!

CATHERINE PARMENTER.

THREE IRISH POETS

By L. A. G. STRONG

MOVEMENTS in art can prove unkind to all but their greatest figures. Early in the history of a movement every goose is a swan: each figure, however slight, is eagerly seized upon and hailed as evidence that there *is* a movement. Then the great figures rise, become accepted by the world, are regarded as synonymous with the movement; and the lesser names are in danger of being forgotten. Some merit nothing better, but upon others the fate falls undeservedly. Their gifts, while not of the first order, are still sufficient to keep a place in history. There are certain poets of the Irish Renaissance, who are by no means forgotten, in this country or their own, but who have been overshadowed; whose privilege it has been to contribute and belong to a movement which has produced great figures, everywhere acknowledged. Yeats, Synge, A.E.—the three names rise like a range of mountains, hiding the smaller peaks.

One of these poets, whom I take first because he was the first in my order of discovery, is Seumas O'Sullivan. While I had still several years of school in front of me, I was impelled by the joyous discovery of Synge and Yeats to adventure further. Searching through a catalog, I came upon the "Poems" of O'Sullivan. Shillings were shillings in those days, but I bought the book. What a discovery it was! One of several that subsequent rereading has not forced me substantially to revise. I see now things which I did not see then, but the sight works both ways. If some of the poems do not seem as good as they did, others seem even better. I can better appreciate the cunning and the mastery with which those long, wavering rhythms are handled, and the certainty with which a personal music, elusive yet definite and quite unforgettable, is caught and sounded. O'Sullivan is a poet of the "Celtic Twilight" school; he belongs in mood to the early Yeats and A.E., but his reading and expression of it are all his own. The melancholy of his best poems is never weak, nor, for all their unearthly lightness, are the lines which support it. These lines, which no one manages more skilfully, have all the grace of long weeds streaming in the tide, and move, like weeds under water, at a distance from us. They are half seen. This half-light of vision, which is his most characteristic achievement, O'Sullivan can summon up as surely in short, almost epigrammatic lines; which is another way of saying that he can subdue his medium perfectly to its task. That beautiful poem, "The Sheep," is a case in point.

"Ah, what memories
Loom for a moment,
Gleam for a moment,
And vanish away,

"Of the white days
When we two together
Went in the evening,
Where the sheep lay."

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This very quality makes him as a rule less successful with people than with things. His character sketches sometimes lack precision and yet, having said that, one is brought up with a jerk by the following:

"On the well-scrubbed wide steps
Of the great house
In the soft summer night
She sits in joyous state,
But still as any pilfering mouse,
Her evening meal laid out meticulously:
Four courses—meat and bread,
Potatoes (cold), and on an old tin plate,
Kept wisely, to await
The waning appetite,
An orange glowing gold.
The rest on paper dishes spread with care,
And as she eats she bows, now here, now there,
With gestures of an old
Forgotten courtesy,
Tempting invisible guests
Out of the purple air,
To share the feast, partake the glowing joy. . . ."

A selection from O'Sullivan's lyrics has recently been published. One or two journals have taken due note of it, but the silence of the others makes a protest timely. This poet, who cannot remain longer overshadowed, should not in justice be neglected now.

The work of Joseph Campbell I encountered next after O'Sullivan's: his "Irishry" was my next purchase. It came as a strong contrast. Here were no long waving lines, no sensitive broodings on the past, but short, athletic, hard-hitting portraits of men and women. The one characteristic shared by the two poets was a liking for the thing half said, a power of conveying a world of meaning in a hint or a brief, apparently casual phrase. Campbell's masterly portrait of the unfrocked priest, one of the finest short biographies I ever hope to read, derives its power from these hints, and from the accumulation of small touches, the books he wrote, the one occasion when the narrator saw him—"he bled at the nose"—which combine into a picture upon which the mind broods long. Campbell's verses are far rougher than O'Sullivan's; almost shockingly rough they seemed to me in those far-off days, used as I was only to the more obvious classics; and their themes are not those to which I had been accustomed.

"Drunk and battered she, with a little eye,
She hitches up her tins and totters by."

But it is a tonic power, and, at the end of his book, there is that small masterpiece for all to admire, the poem by which he is best known, "The Old Woman."

"As a white candle
In a holy place,
So is the beauty
Of an aged face.

"As the spent radiance
Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
With her travail done.

"Her brood gone from her
And her thought is still
As the water
Under a ruined mill."

The man who could so consummately use his muscular verse could do no wrong, I decided. Later, I picked from a barrow in Bayswater his earlier book, "The Gilly of Christ," and liked it nearly as well. Joseph Campbell has not written a great deal, but he is a fine poet, and his place in the history of his movement is secure.

The third poet, Padraic Colum, the best known of the three, is different again. In form and manner his verses were perhaps midway between the two; less harsh than Campbell's, simpler than O'Sullivan's. Indeed, their simplicity was the outstanding fact about them. Not till long afterward did I hear that those verses were learned by heart by cottagers and farmers and simple people, who spoke them at the fireside in the same way that they might sing a song or play a tune on the concertina. Almost alone among modern poets, Padraic Colum had an unlettered as well as a lettered audience. And it is easy to see why. Though there is nothing about him of the boy-who-wouldn't-grow-up, that sickly English abstraction which goes with the worship of games and an indigenous form of sentimentality, Colum has brought to mature manhood a curious innocence of vision, a power of seeing familiar things as if he had only just come across them. His verse has wisdom, but it seems to be intuitive wisdom, not the wisdom of experience. It is untouched by the stain of the world. This innocence of outlook, somewhat akin to Blake's, but more untroubled, more essentially pagan, Colum has kept to the present day. It has survived his years in America, his visits to the South Seas, and the work a poet must do to get his living. The peasants who delighted in the songs from "Wild Earth" would find nothing alien to them in any of the volumes which come afterward, for this poet's skill is nowhere harder to analyze than in his faculty for instantly comprehending a complex situation and reducing it to simple and apparently inevitable expression.

To the work of all these poets I owe a debt of affection, for I not only came upon it early, with a schoolboy's enthusiasm, but I found it for myself, and had no one with whom I could discuss it. It was my own—*secretum meum mihi*. For that reason I shall always be fond of it: fondest perhaps of O'Sullivan's, because his was the first book of contemporary poetry I ever bought with my own money: but the fondness has not made me uncritical. Today, with some experience in verse, I find in these poets the old thrill and the old beauty. The only difference is that I do not now read everything they have written, but only my favorites: and these will stand up to a deal of rereading, mine or anybody's. Colum is widely known, the others less widely; all deserve to be known better.

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Seven Days' Survey

The Church.—The Holy Father recently granted an important audience to 350 members of the International Cotton Congress, the majority of them English, Italian, French and German. M. Brasseur of Belgium, vice-president, assured His Holiness that the cotton federation, which includes twenty-one nations of Europe and Africa, was guided by the principles of the encyclical, "Quadragesimo Anno." * * * On May 23, Pope Pius received in audience the Most Reverend William Kalacherry, native Bishop of Changacherry, India, a diocese whose 286,000 Catholics are said to be descendants of the first Christians in India converted by the Apostle, Saint Thomas. * * * Cardinal Villeneuve of Quebec and Lord Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, signed an agreement at the archiepiscopal palace, May 27, by which the Federation of Catholic Scouts was formally affiliated with the Boy Scouts' Association of Canada. * * * It is reported that seventy American bishops are planning to attend the National Eucharistic Congress at Cleveland next September. * * * A protest against the persecution of the Church in Mexico, signed by 11,575 Catholics, or almost 40 percent of the Catholic population of the Diocese of Spokane, Washington, has been received at the White House. * * * The Second National Eucharistic Congress, to be held at Ljubljana, June 28 to 30, is expected to be the greatest Catholic manifestation in Jugoslavia's history; an attendance of 150,000 is anticipated. His Eminence August Cardinal Hlond, Archbishop of Poznan and Primate of Poland, will represent the Holy Father as Papal Legate. * * * The National Congress of Costa Rica has approved an issue of stamps to commemorate the tercentenary of the apparition of the Virgin of the Angels. The proceeds will be divided between the celebration of the great religious festival in August and the embellishment of the national sanctuary at Cartago. A new Catholic radio station was recently dedicated in Costa Rica. * * * St. Patrick's College of Wellington, the first Catholic college in New Zealand, recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.

The Nation.—Gangsterism again raised its ugly head to make mocking faces at common decency and the forces of law and order in the United States. The nine-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Weyerhaeuser was kidnaped and his parents warned that the child had only three days to live unless $200,000 was paid in ransom. This took place in Tacoma, Washington. At Pasadena, California, extortionists who had been seeking $70,000 from Herbert D. Ivey, bank president and head of the Pasadena Clearing House Association, engaged in a gun battle with police and federal agents, leaving behind one of their number seriously wounded and a policeman wounded but saved from instant death only by the accident of a bullet deflecting from his metal badge instead of piercing his heart. * * * One-sixth of the population of New York State were on relief in March, it was disclosed by a State Emergency Relief Administration investigation; a total of 2,200,000 men, women and children were on relief in the state. * * * The sale of American flags this year has trebled that for the same period last year, a vice-president of the Chicago Association of Commerce reported. * * * A referendum of the nation's wheat farmers showed that they favored by more than 5 to 1 continuance of the A.A.A. plan for crop control. * * * When Postmaster General Farley retires to direct President Roosevelt's campaign for reelection in 1936, Mr. Frank C. Walker, director of the Division of Allotments and Information in connection with the works relief program, it was said in Washington, will be appointed Postmaster General. * * * The Senate by a vote of 55 to 18 passed an appropriation for the navy of $460,000,000. This will provide for 24 new warships, increases of the air forces and will bring the total for national defense to nearly $1,000,000,000. Acceptance in the conference with the House is foreseen. * * * The Senate, as was expected, killed the "green-back" cash bonus bill by failing to override the President's veto by a margin of eight votes. Lobbyists for the veterans began an immediate campaign to keep the issue alive.

The Wide World.—In England, Stanley Baldwin, about to assume the premiership of the government he has in fact headed for an indefinite period, spoke in favor of an air "Locarno" along the lines proposed by Hitler. In his speech was also an "impractical" aside for which he had "no apology." "I have always believed that the greatest security against war in any part of the world whatever would be the close collaboration of the British Empire and the United States. The combined power of the navies, the potential man power, the immediate economic power of refusal to trade or lend money would be a sanction that no power on earth, however strong, would dare to face . . . sometimes we may have our dreams." * * * The Austrian régime continues to be saddled with problems of great importance. In Salzburg the Vice-Chancellor, Starhemberg, leader of the private army called the Heimwehr, attacked for two and a half hours other private armies, especially the Sturmscharen, militant young peasants organized behind the Chancellor Schuschnigg. And these are not the only private armies. If a plebiscite condemning the present government were held in the fall, it would be doubtful whether the Nazis or the Social Democrats would win through the consequent disorganization. * * * Stalin, without explanation, dissolved the organization of Old Bolsheviks, who were active before the revolution. He also ordered a careful survey of party members. The only explanation offered is that orthodoxy is to be even more carefully

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maintained. * * * General Goering of Germany visited Bulgaria on his honeymoon and had extended conversations with King Boris, who, since the most recent coup d'état, rules the country. It was hinted that Bulgaria is about to give up the foreign policy it has pursued since the war of "no foreign adventures." * * * Nazi persecution of Jews increased in Munich. Twenty-two German Protestant clergymen publicly chose to remain in concentration camps rather than to sign statements that they had been put there for genuinely illegal acts. More Catholic nuns were imprisoned, ostensibly for sending money out of the country. The Pope severely condemned German practise of eugenics and sterilization.

* * * *

The French Franc and Constitution.—On May 23, the Bank of France raised the discount rate from 2.5 to 3 percent and two days later to 4 percent, and on May 28 to 6 percent. During the one day, May 27, $73,949,000 in gold was withdrawn from the bank. Ships could not accommodate the gold that was scheduled for America. Estimates on the deficit in the French budget range from 4,000,000,000 to 6,500,000,000 francs. Besides that the government needs 4,000,000,000 francs for the railways, 8,000,000,000 or 10,000,000,000 for defense and still another 8,000,000,000 for extra-budgetary expenses. In spite of France's still enormous gold holdings, there is a definite threat of devaluation which few Frenchmen seem to want. Premier Flandin has indicated definitely that he wants powers not only of a financial kind, and not only powers permitting him to cut expenses without recourse to Parliament, but also administrative and economic authority to correct the more deep-seated ills of French business. The program suggested before Parliament assembled on May 28, however, was restricted to financial loans and savings through suspension of financial and pension charges. Behind the debates on the franc is the deeper and more bitter controversy on revision of the Constitution in order to give the executive more authority. Last year Doumergue failed to strengthen the administrative arm, and when Parliament convened last week it was still a question whether or not Flandin would succeed. The Left has recently been gaining power in all local elections, but the resolution of the Left to fight authoritarian developments is not as clear as it was. The middle parties, especially the largest, the Radical Socialist, is divided, with the leader of the party, Herriot, supporting Flandin. France is probably due for a great grant of power to the premier—such as Roosevelt got in 1933—or else a "cascade" of succeeding ministries which would bring political and financial uncertainty beyond anything experienced since the war.

Accord in Money.—With the French franc, bulwark of the gold standard countries, in immediate danger, prospects for an international agreement on money were mentioned in the press of many countries. Not a single nation is theoretically opposed to monetary stabilization and a relaxation of trade barriers. The key to any possible understanding is Anglo-American agreement. The French, harassed by internal political troubles, are striking out oratorically against foreign devaluation, calling it the cause of their worries, and putting themselves into a position where they would have to accept a general agreement and would probably like to use it as a means for limited devaluation. The London *Times* is sceptical, but the *Times* is less and less a barometer of British governmental opinion. When Stanley Baldwin takes over the premiership he will be careful that Austen Chamberlain does not commit the Conservative party to as self-sufficient expressions as he has uttered while the responsibility of the Conservatives has been somewhat veiled. Washington correspondents have definitely said that our government is contemplating an international economic parley, limited to a few of the great financial powers. The Brain Trust, with its tendencies toward autarchy, has been steadily receding into the background, and Secretary Hull, apostle of freer trade and an international standard, is getting more and more attention. His radio speech, which closely followed Secretary Morgenthau's and had presidential approval, leaned even more toward stabilization than the Secretary of the Treasury's. He is said to believe that this fall an international crisis will come and that then it will become apparent whether all the nations will have to take in their belts and try to live alone, or whether they will reestablish a free system for exchanging surpluses in a more or less orthodox manner.

Ethiopian Compromise.—A number of considerations of serious consequence are raised by Mussolini's acceptance of the two resolutions adopted by the Council of the League of Nations, May 25. Captain Anthony Eden, Lord Privy Seal, is given the lion's share of the credit for the compromise embodied in the resolutions, but the stanch support of Foreign Minister Pierre Laval was also an important factor in Italy's restricted capitulation to a united Anglo-French front. Under this agreement Italy is free to negotiate with Ethiopia directly and alone until July 25. If the dispute is not settled by that date, the League Council will intervene and name a neutral to act as arbitrator until August 25. If the question is still not settled by that date, the Council will take it over entirely. Italy's recognition of the League's jurisdiction in her quarrel with Ethiopia and her promise to settle the dispute without recourse to war was immediately made subject to various interpretations. The Ethiopian delegate was said to be of the opinion that it would preclude further shipments of troops and munitions to the borders of Ethiopia. On the other hand Mussolini, in a warlike speech before the Italian Chamber of Deputies, told his countrymen not to have any illusions about the probabilities of successful arbitration. The Associated Press also reported that orders for the mobilization of 20,000 more officers and technicians had just been given. Foreign observers seemed to agree that Italy's acceptance of the Anglo-French plan had definitely postponed any outbreak until August. Some, however, felt that this, coupled with the League's recent settlements of the Danzig and Jugoslavia-Hungary disputes, had served to enhance the League's strength and authority considerably. Others

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believed that the whole episode disclosed the essential weakness of the Covenant today, since the most strenuous Anglo-French efforts were required to persuade Mussolini to submit to League jurisdiction at all.

Pan-American Progress.—In the Council Chamber of the new City Hall in Buenos Aires, representatives of the twenty-one republics of the Western Hemisphere gathered for the Pan-American Commercial Conference. Remarkable rises in business between the countries of the two Americas were cited and the conferees devoted themselves particularly to the problems of developing all forms of transport and communications. Foreign Minister Carlos Saavedra Lamas of Argentina made the opening address. "Pan-Americanism," he said, "is progressing. No longer are the debates of our conferences agitated by the controversy over intervention or the necessity of 'mediation' that usually signified an insult against the sovereignty of some other republic. The American nations no longer are judged by the heights of their chimneys or by the size of their factories, but only by their moral worth, the honesty of their actions at home and abroad. These are the same standards on which individuals are judged. The elimination of the Platt Amendment, which was promised at the seventh Pan-American Conference, has been accomplished. The 'good neighbor' policy is now being practised on our continent. Let us in all justice make a frank acknowledgment of that fact." Among the proposals which will be considered at the conference is one made by Brazil for a common monetary unit for Latin American countries, an outlined extensive system of international railroads and highways, uniformity of customs classifications, names, weights and measures and international agreements to avoid dumping.

Jane Addams (1860-1935).—As a student at Rockford Seminary, later Rockford College, in Illinois, Jane Addams had a number of companions who later devoted their lives to ameliorating the ills of humanity. Among them were Ellen Starr, with whom she was to found Hull House almost ten years later, and Catherine Waugh, who became a noted lawyer and worker for women's rights. After graduation Jane Addams spent considerable time in European travel where she was struck by the misery and squalor of a number of world-famous cities. At London she was deeply impressed by Toynbee House, perhaps the first regular settlement house of modern times. Finally after a long struggle with ill health she decided at the age of twenty-nine to purchase the large red brick house of the Hull family, which was situated in the midst of some of Chicago's worst slums. She and Ellen Starr made it ready, decorating it with taste and even elegance, and then threw open the doors to all comers. Almost from the first it served as a day nursery, library, school, free restaurant and haven in any storm for unfortunates of every race and creed. Miss Addams maintained her connection with Hull House throughout her life. Her visits to the poor and other direct contacts led her to take an active part in civic affairs. During the three years she held the position of Garbage Commissioner in Chicago she accomplished much in cleaning up the disease-breeding streets and alleys of the city. Jane Addams was also courageous in upholding unpopular causes. She was a stanch pacifist throughout the World War, sticking to her principles at the expense of considerable popularity. She was a firm prohibitionist even after the nation had voted for repeal. In 1931, Miss Addams shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Nicholas Murray Butler. The results of her experiments at Hull House have been an inspiration for settlement work in various parts of the world, and her contribution to the welfare of humanity is immeasurable.

European Film Congress.—Last month an International Film Congress was held in Berlin. In connection with the general congress Catholic film workers from Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Jugoslavia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland and Sweden held a number of sessions of their own. In the course of these meetings Ludvik Safranek, chairman of the Czechoslovak Film Association of Prague, speaking in praise of the Legion of Decency, declared that the effects of its campaign have been felt not only in America but in all the countries of the world where American films are exhibited. Mr. Safranek held up the Legion of Decency as a model and urged the delegates to collaborate with the American campaign for better films. A survey of the European film situation revealed varying conditions in the different countries. Belgian Catholics have a non-political Central Film Bureau which is so well equipped and competently managed that it enjoys a considerable prestige in non-Catholic circles. Although there is no unified film organization to comprise the whole territory of France, the French Central Film Bureau was said to be working satisfactorily. The report from Holland pictured a single, smoothly functioning, effective organization. In countries like Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria serious difficulties are presented. Centralization of the work is not possible in Germany, where the Ministry of Propaganda plans to subject all film associations to strict state control. Of the 132 Catholic-owned motion picture theatres in Czechoslovakia only 42 are equipped for talking films. In Austria Catholic film workers are represented in every branch of the industry.

Cardinal O'Connell Speaks.—Cardinal O'Connell of Boston, senior Cardinal in the United States, said in an address to a large meeting: "The Christian principle is not to fight with our neighbors and call names and stir uprisings and create discontent in the hearts of the poor, pretending to alleviate them when they are only made worse and more intolerable. . . . The office of the priest and bishop of the Catholic Church is to continue to love poverty, to love the poor, to respect the poor and to teach them, to help them and to guide them, not to ill-gotten wealth or anarchy or discontent in their lives, but to bring them, through the grace of God, the word of God and the sacraments, peace and happiness in whatever condition of life they may happen to be. That is the true principle

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of Catholic life and no other. And all those disturbing voices, the shouting, yelling and screaming, are so unbecoming to anyone who occupies the place of a teacher in Christ's church, that even the quality of their voices betrays them. They are hysterical. And no priest of God, no teacher of the Christian church, ever permits himself to be hysterical. The matter is too serious." The Cardinal then warned against those persons who "talk with a voice that seems to ring with a sort of sham infallibility." He concluded with a rephrasing of the Holy Father's encyclical counsel to Catholic journalists: "When it is necessary for them to enter into controversy, they should combat error and resist adversaries in such manner that the latter will know that they are prompted by rectitude and above all inspired by charity."

A New Catholic Book Store.—The much-discussed emergence in the United States of a representative Catholic literature which will give a just interpretation of Catholic thought and action, not only in strictly Catholic spheres but also in the general life of the nation, has perhaps had no more significant sign than the increase of Catholic book stores and libraries. There have been notable pioneer efforts in this field which have from time to time been dealt with elsewhere in THE COMMONWEAL. Two new enterprises are: one, a new shop on Lexington Avenue and 49th Street which will be conducted by the Franciscans under the supervision of Father John Forest, O. F. M.; and the other, the combined book store, reading room and information center of the St. Paul Guild. The latter has been decorated under the direction of Mr. Maurice Lavanoux of the Liturgical Arts Society with the aid of his confrères in the society. An original in black and white by Mrs. Hildreth Meière will be one of the principal decorations. Mrs. Helen Walker Homan, author and editor, will be in charge of the reading room and book store. Father Henry P. Fisher, C. S. P., will keep regular office hours in a private office in the rear of the establishment, which is at 117 East 57th Street, New York City; and he will strive to answer all inquiries about the Church which will be directed to him. In time, conferences for converts and prospective converts will be a regular feature of the Guild work.

* * * *

Farm Bankruptcy.—Among the sweeping decisions of the Supreme Court was one which had to do with a measure not strictly a New Deal enterprise: this was the unanimous opinion of the Court that the Farm Bankruptcy Law was unconstitutional. The law had been passed late in the last session of Congress through the political jockeying of Senator Huey Long. It provided for a five-year moratorium in cases where a creditor and debtor were unable to agree on the scaling-down of a farm mortgage and during this period there could be no foreclosure on a property if the occupier of the premises paid "a reasonable rent." The Court held that this was taking property from its owner without due process of law, as required in the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. There has been relatively little recourse to the provisions of the law since its enactment and it is said to have played no part in the improvement of farm conditions. These improvements are ascribed to the rise in price for farm products and to the help given by the Farm Credit Association, a New Deal agency. This agency has loaned $3,000,000,000 to farmers in the last two years, resulting in an annual saving of $35,000,000 in interest charges paid by farmers, and fewer farm foreclosures.

Tenure of Office.—The same day the Supreme Court invalidated NRA codes it handed down a decision in the Humphrey case repudiating the idea that an officer appointed by the President, but for a term specified by Congress, could be dismissed "at the mere will of the President." William E. Humphrey, who is now dead, refused to give up his position on the Federal Trade Commission when President Roosevelt tried to discharge him because "I do not feel that your mind and my mind can go along together on either the policies or the administering of the Federal Trade Commission and frankly I think it is best for the people of the country that I should have a full confidence." The Court distinguished between positions such as a postmastership, which is "merely a unit in the Executive Department," and over which the President has full authority, and offices of a legislative or judiciary agency. "The fixing of a definite term, subject to remove for cause, unless there be some countervailing provision or circumstance indicating the contrary, is enough to establish the legislative intent that the term is not to be curtailed in the absence of such cause." The Court particularly stressed the need of keeping the Federal Trade Commission, the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Court of Claims free from outside pressure. It thus took a clear stand in the ticklish balance between the right of tenure and the right of quiet political sabotage.

Telephonic Television.—Engineers of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company announced, May 23, that they are planning an experiment which will indicate whether television has not reached the point where two people engaged in a long distance telephone conversation may see each other. Next April a "coaxial cable," which will make possible the simultaneous transmission of 200 telephone calls, will be put into operation between New York and Philadelphia. It is said that the present single wire lines between the two cities are restricted to four telephone conversations at the same time. The new high-fidelity transmission line is capable of transmitting frequencies as high as 1,000,000 cycles. This takes place over a wire set in the center of a metal tube, an arrangement which permits the transmission of a wide range of electrical vibrations. For this reason it is anticipated that the picture transmitted will be clearly defined. If this experiment proves successful under actual operating conditions, it may be used to link television radio broadcasts, much as telephone lines connect stations for sound-program distribution today.

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The Play and Screen

By GRENVILLE VERNON

Parade

WHILE it would be perhaps going too far to say that in its last production of the season the Theatre Guild has gone Communist, it certainly has gone dull—that is, except when Jimmy Savo and Eve Arden are on the stage. "Parade" is announced as a "satirical review." It is a review, but satirical is scarcely the word to express the naif, obvious, tub-thumping, soap-box type of humor which permeates most of the sketches. "Parade" was originally owned by the Theatre Union, which intended to present it at the Civic Repertory Theatre in 14th Street. Apparently the Theatre Union decided that it didn't have the resources adequate for a musical review, and got the Guild to take it over. Why the Guild should have taken it over must be a mystery to all who have seen it. Perhaps the Guild wanted to prove that it had gone completely native, though if it did it must have confused native with 14th Stret; perhaps it just wanted once in its lifetime to produce a musical show; only under these circumstances why should it have picked "Parade"?

"Parade" it did pick, however, and on the program announces that its sketches are by Paul Peters, George Sklar, Frank Gabrielson and David Lesan; its lyrics by Paul Peters, George Sklar and Kyle Crichton; its music by Jerome Moross; its dialog staged by Philip Loeb; its musical and dance numbers supervised and staged by Robert Alton; its settings by Lee Simonson; its orchestra under the direction of Max Meth—but, alas, what all these cooks produced is but a very thin sort of broth! Of course Mr. Simonson's settings have merit, but even he isn't in his usual vein; and there are two or three skits which have some intrinsic humor. But aside from Jimmy Savo and Miss Arden the rest had better have been omitted.

There is, however, Jimmy Savo, and his presence alone atones for much. Mr. Savo is a pantomimist almost the equal of Charlie Chaplin, and in addition he can both speak and sing. The high point of the evening is his appearance as the proprietor of a factory who during a strike decides to run the plant himself. To watch Mr. Savo in terror of his own machinery, and his final frantic efforts to put covers on the pots as they whirl by him on a moving belt, is a scene never to be forgotten, while as the hungry man who attempts to get chestnuts from a chestnut vendor he displays both a humor and a pathos which are fully worthy of Chaplin himself. Jimmy Savo is a unique comedian. Like Chaplin he succeeds not only by what he does, but what he refuses to do. When exaggeration is needed he can be as absurd as any, perhaps even more absurd. His lope, his dress, the roll of his eyes, are his and his alone, but they are always controlled by a keen intelligence. He is a master of action, but even a greater master of hesitation. He is a clown, but he is far more than that. He is one of the finest artists on the stage. In Miss Eve Arden he has a worthy companion. Miss Arden is a young woman who ought to go far. She has in her manner, looks and variety something which reminds one of Cornelia Otis Skinner. Her impersonations of a college graduate applying for a job at Macy's, and of a Russian princess lecturing on her escape from Russia, are unadulterated delights, while in "Send for the Militia" she shows that she can put over an ironic song. If only Mr. Savo and Miss Arden could be in every sketch, and there were no dances between the sketches! As propaganda in favor of a revolution "Parade" only shows that revolutionists are preciously devoid of wit or even humor. Which to the American people above 14th Street will scarcely be an argument for the revolution. (At the Guild Theatre.)

Escape Me Never

IN MANY ways the film version of Margaret Kennedy's play, "Escape Me Nver," is more satisfying than the play, and Elisabeth Bergner in it equally as fine. The play itself is a pretty weak thing, a mere vehicle for Miss Bergner's virtuosity, but the film, partly because we do not hold a film to the standards we insist upon in a play, and partly because the medium of the screen allows of a greater variety of treatment, seems to take on a life and even a sincerity which were not there when Miss Bergner recently appeared at the Shubert Theatre. In particular, the play gains by the audience being able to witness the scenes at the rehearsal of Sebastian's ballet in a very much more elaborate form than was possible in the acting version, and also by the atmosphere given through real scenes in Venice and in the mountains. That the result is basically any truer may be questioned, but at least it has a greater illusion of reality. The story is softened a little for screen audiences, and Sebastian is made not quite so much the heartless egoist he is in the play. Whether or not this is artistically desirable is perhaps to be questioned, but it undoubtedly pleases the average audience.

Miss Bergner's extraordinary qualities are again evident—and also her theatric tricks. If only she wouldn't eat her way through the action! But she is both a personality and a marvellous technician. Hugh Sinclair is the Sebastian as he was in the play, and equally as effective, and the same is true of Leon Quartermaine. Irene Vanbrugh gives added distinction to the part of Lady McLean, and Penelope Dudley-Ward was effective enough as the annoying Fenella. Griffith Jones as Caryl and Lyn Harding as Heinrich give admirable performances, and the direction of Dr. Paul Czinner shows that British films are now fully of age. (At Radio City Music Hall.)

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Communications

SLOVAKIA—WHITHER BOUND?

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: The letter of Mr. Stephen J. Palickar, in your issue of April 5, gives misleading information about the real situation of the Slovaks. The Pittsburgh Agreement, to which the writer of the letter refers, was reached by Slovak and Czech American citizens at Pittsburgh in 1918, and it laid down several principles on which the collaboration between the Czechs and Slovaks in America could be assured. The signatories to the agreement expressed themselves in favor of a political program according to which Slovaks and Czechs would unite in one state in which Slovakia would have its own administration, its own assembly and its own courts; the Slovak language would be the official language in schools and public life in general; the Czechoslovak state would be a republic and its institutions democratic. The document concluded by saying that the detailed organization of the state was to be left to the freed Czechs and Slovaks and to their lawful representatives to solve.

While favoring for Slovakia its own administration, the agreement did not provide "that Slovakia was to be a state in a federal republic," as the author of the letter erroneously asserts. Under the circumstances in which the agreement was signed, and in view of its nature, it is obvious that, while testifying to the interest of the American Czechs and Slovaks in the institutions of the future state, it could have little legislative power for the Czechs and Slovaks in Europe. Yet those who have followed without bias and without prejudice the efforts of both the Czechs and Slovaks in their own republic will agree that the principles referred to in the agreement have not only been fulfilled, but that in many instances they have been exceeded by subsequent developments.

Thus, Czechoslovakia is a republic with a parliamentary régime, based on the proportional representation and secret ballot for men and women over twenty-one. Its Constitution is democratic. The country is divided into four administrative provinces with provincial assemblies. Slovakia is one of those provinces, and like the others it has its own assembly at Bratislava besides being represented in the national parliament and senate in Prague by sixty-two freely elected representatives on behalf of six various Slovak political groups, two of which are Catholic. The Slovak language, similar to the Czech to the extent of being mutually understood without any difficulty whatsoever, is not only the official language in Slovakia but is freely employed by Slovaks throughout the country in their private and official dealings. It is absurd to write "that the next generation will not be able to speak Slovak at all." Why should it not continue and flourish in a country where nothing stands in the way of its development, and where in several thousand schools, opened since the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic, Slovak is the language of instruction?

As to the fear lest Hungary claim part of Slovak territory, let me quote part of the declaration made by the Slovak members of the parliament and senate on December 20, 1933: "The Slovak nation welcomed with satisfaction and rejoicing the collapse of pre-war Hungary and voluntarily left that state in order to establish a new future for itself in unity with the Czech lands and its Czech kinsmen. Slovakia has, of course, her own economic and social troubles just as the Czech lands have, especially in the prevailing economic crisis, and just as all states and all peoples have, but these she will herself solve within the framework of the Czechoslovak republic. We desire to live in peace and quiet with all our neighbors, but we shall not reconcile ourselves to a policy which aspires to destroy the Czechoslovak state and thus to throw the Slovak nation back into its former condition of political dependence and serfdom."

JOSEF HANC.

THE GREATEST CHARITY OF THE HOUR

Oneida, N. Y.

TO the Editor: It is a great mistake to feel that when food and shelter has been provided for America's great army or unemployed, we have paid our greatest debt to society. Those people are wandering far down the street called "poverty lane," but where will it all end? They are defeated and discouraged and seem to have forgotten that men like Lincoln have risen to greatest heights from out of poverty. They, long ago, lost sight of the fact that every sunrise brings with it a new day filled with possibilities. It is our duty as citizens to keep such thoughts alive; to keep those people from the life of the street and away from the beer gardens, whose bright red signs are seen flashing on every corner.

What a splendid thing it would be to give the NRA a twofold meaning to include the slogan, National Right-thinking Act, along with its already familiar meaning. Probably the greatest lesson which the depression has taught is the fact that material things alone cannot bring happiness. It is the working together of the mental and spiritual forces that reaps its harvest in peace, contentment and prosperity. "As a man thinketh in his mind so he is." It is our duty to impress that theory on the minds of those down-and-outers and show them that it isn't just a slogan; that it will really and truly work, if they will only keep their thoughts and minds clean. Show them that poverty is no disgrace. Was not the Saviour of mankind born in a manger? It is justice and lofty principles that will form the corner-stone on which the America of tomorrow will progress and prosper. Those who emerge from this chaos will be a new people developed according to God's word (Jeremias, xv, 21), which reads: "I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the mighty." They will have a greater sympathy for human shortcomings and will be restless in their ambitions.

They are today temporarily blinded by the glare of misfortune's light and we must make them realize that it is not loss of money which leaves its stain upon humanity but loss of character. It is trying times like these that bring to mind the prediction of that great poet,

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Robert Burns: "Coming yet, when man to man the world o'er shall brother be for a' that."

One of our most important duties to the man in the street is to keep alive his self-respect. To work for such a cause is a privilege and an honor too fine for any one of us to disregard. It is by far the greatest charity of the hour. "Strengthen ye the feeble hands, and confirm the weak knees" (Isaias, xxxv, 3). It is a priceless, blessed work; that of helping those less fortunate than ourselves, and it is a vital necessity for the good of the coming generations that we exert every effort to preserve in those who are facing ill-fortune the three great faiths through which all things are possible: faith in themselves and their abilities; faith in their fellow men; and faith in God.

C. L. Roberts.

THE CATHOLIC LITERARY REVIVAL

Richmond Hill, N. Y.

TO the Editor: Almost a year has rolled by since some stir was made about the Catholic Literary Revival. On the first anniversary, as it were, of that reawakened interest it appears to one observer of the literary horizon that our "ships" have failed to come in. During the sessions of the Catholic Book Conference a year ago, I could not escape the uncomfortable feeling that, somewhat contrary to the precedents of literary history, the cart was being put before the horse. Especially was this true of fiction. The Catholic novel, as an artistic entity, was very much in the air. The formula for the Catholic novel, and the principles of its critique, both seemed very much at hand, despite the relative paucity of specimens upon which to botanize. With something akin to dogmaticism, many seemed ready to draw up an incipient "Ars Poetica"; but now as then, the empirical sources of constructive criticism are yet to be born.

If the material of life be plentiful for the purposes of fiction, is not the conclusion justified that we are lacking in the essential creative and technical power? That life offers the material can be indicated by reference to at least one example. During the very twelve months that witnessed how our revival waxed and waned, information has reached us from Mexico which, in quantity, variety, and poignancy of interest, should have been sufficient to have inspired at least one first-rate novel. As a non-Russian found in Russia the inspiration for "The Gates of Hell," so may an American with the gift of expression find inspiration in the return of the Aztec gods across the Rio Grande. The very theme which could serve in a novel of the sort is vibrant in whatever Catholic literary background we have in fiction.

The lonely priest riding the lonely road, with a price on his head, is the most vivid memory of the novels of Monsignor Hugh Benson. The same heroic figure crosses the scenes at times in the neighborhood of Comster in some of the recent efforts of Sheila Kaye-Smith; and one regrets the rapidity of his mysterious exit, in this latter case, as much as one thrilled with expectancy at his sudden arrival. This modern English novelist seems satisfied to whet the appetite of the reader; and this particular fiction appetite must approach as near the universal as any that might be named among Catholic readers. All this is to the good: but are any attempts being made in America to express, to represent, to interpret, life in the form of a story as Catholics know it in Mexico today?

I trust some of the readers of The Commonweal share with me the hope that further enlightenment on the survival of the Catholic Literary Revival will be forthcoming in the pages of this periodical. Not, "Can the Catholic write a novel?" But, "Are American Catholics writing Catholic novels?"

William E. Manz.

SAD PLIGHT OF GREAT MISSIONARY

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: The special appeal this spring of the Marquette League for Catholic Indian Missions, 105 East 22nd Street, New York City, is made in the hope of preventing the closing of Father Bonaventure's day schools among the Papago Indians of Arizona. The headquarters of Father Bonaventure Oblasser, O. F. M., who is in charge of these day schools, is St. Catherine's Mission, Topawa, Arizona. Broken and discouraged, Father Bonaventure does not personally appeal, but his associates do.

"Good Father Bonaventure is at the helm," writes Father Gerard Brenneke, O. F. M. "What the Missions need is the grace of God and money. We are trying to bring the grace of God to these poor Papago. I hope you can furnish the money. I am asking for Father Bonaventure. He is too humble to push himself forward." Another co-laborer, Father Lucius Zittier, O. F. M., no less ardent a supporter of his chief, wrote recently, "Father Bonaventure's work in Papago day schools bears fruit daily."

For the sake of the faith of hundreds of little Papago children and to encourage a great and zealous missionary who has given his all for the past twenty-five years on the burning deserts of the Southwest, in order that the children of the red man may live and die in our Holy Faith, I beg of our friends to make a special effort at this time in behalf of Father Bonaventure. I realize how hard the times are, but surely God will bless any sacrifice that you make for the sake of our little Indian children.

Rt. Rev. Mgr. William J. Flynn, P.A.,
Director General, Marquette League.

MARIETTA HOLLEY

Webster Groves, Mo.

TO the Editor: I am engaged upon a biography of Marietta Holley, 1836-1926. If any of your readers have letters or other information about the humorist who created the most famous humorous woman in American literature, Samantha Allen, will they please communicate with me. Miss Holley had the ability to express much in a few words: "The Deacon and his wife lived happy together—she loved to work and he loved to have her work."

Cyril Clemens.

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Books

Recent Verse

FEW COMMONWEAL poets have a steadier, more interested following than Robert P. Tristram Coffin, whose new volume, "Strange Holiness," contains many lyrics which made their first bows in these pages (Macmillan. $2.00). It seems to me that Mr. Coffin is a richer, more significant poet today than ever previously. This fact will not be immediately apparent. The couplet, upon which he relies so exclusively and passionately, is in some ways a great handicap; and one is sometimes afraid that, just as Father Tabb was cabined and cribbed by his quatrain, Mr. Coffin may be ultimately so bound to his two-line straitness that a full release of his imagination will become impossible. For the moment, however, all is well. Charging natural images with intense, very human reflection, the poet always leaves the impression of actually having been born on earth instead of in a library or in some land of phantoms. There are moments when he seems to have effected wedding a man as great as Crabbe to a visionary as clear-sighted as Blake—moments of an ecstasy flashing directly from the reality of life. By way of example, I cannot forego quoting what is probably the most quotable poem in the book:

"Across the years he could recall
His father one way best of all.

"In the stillest hour of night
The boy awakened to a light.

"Half in dreams, he saw his sire
With his great hands full of fire.

"The man had struck a match to see
If his son slept peacefully.

"He held his palms each side the spark
His love had kindled in the dark.

"His two hands were curved apart
In the semblance of a heart.

"He wore, it seemed to his small son,
A bare heart on his hidden one,

"A heart that gave out such a glow
No son awake could bear to know.

"It showed a look upon a face
Too tender for the day to trace.

"One instant, it lit all about,
And then the secret heart went out.

"But it shone long enough for one
To know that hands held up the sun."

That is a poem which is by no means so simple as it appears; indeed the magic of the fifth stanza presupposes

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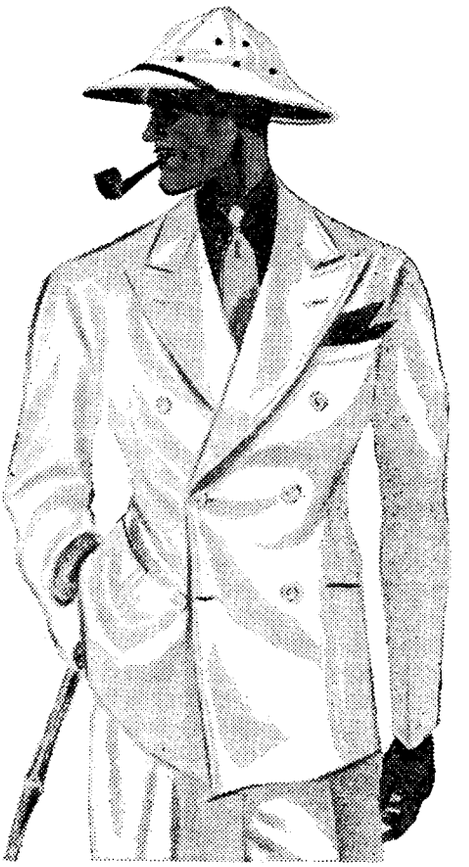

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not only great skill of visualization but also exacting literary craftsmanship. The verse of Father Charles J. Quirk, whose latest book is entitled (unsuitably, I hope) "Gesture before Farewell" (Dial Press. $2.00), intentionally covets purity and humility of expression. One must come to it with no theories or any relish for the abstruse, content to find a religious romantic whose poems are airs of praise or love. Father Quirk's couplets, notably in the "Stable Shed," almost stir recollections of Fra Angelico; and certain of the briefer lyrics are genuinely moving. The book merits being taken up affectionately by those who are interested in Catholic poetry. One lyric, a madrigal "for my mother," is as arresting as anything of the kind I have seen:

"I love her not for beauty's sake,
Though beauty carved her form and face,
And taught her with such artless grace
The courtesies of high-born place,
And tuned with his deft finger-tips
The glorious music of her lips. . . .

"I loved her for her own sweet sake—
Ah, this alone my heart doth break."

Vera Brittain, whose prose recollections have interested the ladies from Salem to Savannah, may be an admirable raconteur, but one surmises that her "Poems of the War and After" could be duplicated by all except the hopeless sophomores (Macmillan. $1.25). By comparison Marianne Moore is doubtless the bard of the graduate school. There is no question but that "Selected Poems," with an introduction by T. S. Eliot, is an absorbing and astonishingly intelligent book—for those who will devote time and patience to verse really very much like the satires of Donne, and yet characterized by the keen archery of a modern American woman. She scrutinizes the objective relentlessly, appending to it something akin to memoranda for a philosophic seamstress. The sole difficulty is that to many all this "precision" will seem heartless as Aristotle and not much more beguiling. Mr. Eliot says that the "genuineness" of poetry is something only a "very small number" of contemporary readers can discern. It is good to know the name of one such clairvoyant has now been supplied (Macmillan. $2.00).

Mark Van Doren is a very likable and even companionable writer. A generous volume of new verse, "A Winter Diary and Other Poems," reminds one very much of certain aspects of the eighteenth century, Cotton for instance. Sonnets, lyrics and page-long descriptive poems avoid unseemly emotionalism and turgid phrasing for the sake of a decent plainness suggestive of New England scenery. Van Doren's most regrettable tendency is trying to ride a little on the Emily Dickinson horse. When he writes, for example, of the spring orchard that "Now every top is bursting into bees," he leaves us a bit befuddled and amused. But for the most part he reads as a good, stout-souled author should, revealing a heart in the right place and feet properly on the ground (Macmillan. $1.90).

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Of Elizabeth Daryush something has been said in THE COMMONWEAL by a more gifted critic of verse than the present reviewer. To me it seems that she grows steadily more impressive, and that "Verses: Fourth Book" will bulk large in the vision of anybody who, at a future time, surveys the poets of the 1930's. With her technical achievement, which is decidedly interesting, we cannot be concerned here. It must do to observe that some of these lyrics, restrained and even precise though they are, possess a genuinely monumental strength. For example there is a "Lullaby," based on a theme of horses stumbling home after the day's work, which sings the whole restorative energy of nature with passionate, unflorid directness; and there is a song about the essence of poetry which is sheer concentrated excellence. Mrs. Daryush is fond of discerning the compensations which balance man and woman; and on this topic, in the genuine scriptural sense, she writes with classic distinction and modern virility (Oxford. $2.50).

I venture to think that, when many years have gone by, some annotator of twentieth-century poetry will turn to the remarks which are about to follow. There are days when reviewing books is worse than sawing wood—when one reads through seemingly endless pages, often good ones, for no other reason than that a page or two of comment will result. Then suddenly there is an utterly splendid experience—the experience of finding what seems the "real thing." I honestly believe that Thomas McGreevy, who happens to be a Dubliner, is a very considerably more interesting writer than either Auden or Spender. He is modernist with little fuss about it—a voice of the twentieth century weakened by no sentimental bother about living in that century, and an echo of the poetic tradition in whom no wraiths of dead poets attempt a feeble resuscitation. Perhaps the most impressive thing of all about McGreevy is that he can write a religious poem without striking an attitude. It is a little book considering that it gathers verse written between 1917 and 1930, but it is one of the few books we might really care to have more of (Viking. $1.50). Notice the chasteness, the contemporaneousness, and the fire of these images; the vigor of the McGreevy emphasis; and the genuineness of the verbal materials used. But, alas, it will be a long time before "The Six Who Were Hanged" will be accepted as a better Irish poem than Davis's "Fontenoy." What matter? I am thinking of that annotator.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

A Useful Book

Preface to Religion, by Bernard Iddings Bell. New York: Harper and Brothers. $1.75.

THIS book consists of five lectures delivered at Lafayette College. As stated in his introduction, the author assumed that his hearers had certain vaguely pious sentiments, a loyalty or two, some prejudices; but such theology as they knew was apt to be of the most crude sort, intellectually contemptible; and more disastrous still, they were usually without any cultic practise. For such a group, Dr. Bell has put religion in a way to

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make them recognize its importance and to stimulate further investigation.

In a few instances, e.g., the historicity of the Old Testament, he has gone farther than would a Catholic. But on the whole he is remarkably fair. A few quotations will indicate his attitude.

"What those who governed these new nations [arising on the ruins of the Roman Empire] wished to make of Christianity, to be sure, was precisely what Constantine had desired, what Adolf Hitler desires today, what statesman always desire—an obedient arm of the wordly government. . . . It is true to say that, if it had not been for the Papacy in Rome, the Western Church would almost certainly have become, and that very soon, what the Eastern Church in fact became. . . . The spiritual adventure for the Kingdom organized itself around the Holy Father in the once imperial city, to resist the world in the name of the Lord." "Thanks to the Pope and papal loyal prelates everywhere, plus the monks, the Church remade the world."

"By 1625 the Reformation was over. In Germany, each petty King dictated the polity, policy and procedure of his 'national Church.' . . . That is the true meaning of the Reformation—the breaking up of Christendom and the bringing of the Church to heel." "Henry VIII was an avowed Catholic; but he had two great desires which the Papacy opposed. First, he had a longing to rob the monasteries of England, which looked after practically all the social services of the realm, for the enrichment of himself and of a new-rich, business-enterprise nobility which he had created. Secondly, he had a wife older than himself, dull, incapable of bearing him a son and heir, whom he wished to put away."

All this has been said by Catholics. But to have it said by one who is not a Catholic to college students with a Protestant background carries more weight with them than the frankly Catholic apologetic of Hilaire Belloc. As a preface to the study of Catholicism, this book should prove useful to those instructing non-Catholics.

J. Elliot Ross.

Napoleon in Fiction

The Pinnacle of Glory, by Wilson Wright. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

THIS is a fictional account (though departing very little from historical fact) of the last five years of Napoleon's life. Dimly in the background the reader discerns the forms of imperial grandeur, now insubstantial as the mists of St. Helena, while before this ghostly pageant moves the figure of Napoleon still plotting campaigns, but this time small domestic ones directed against English colonial officials. One gains the impression of a fantastic world, ordered by its own peculiar set of values—all of them stemming from a secluded figure dwelling in a moldy house surrounded by a regiment of redcoats—and committed to ignoring the facts; nevertheless, human beings, precise and real, populate it, motivated in their actions by the little vanities and generosities that mankind everywhere manifests; the dream-like quality

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does not issue from any vagueness of perception on the author's part but is something that his acuity has discovered as essential in his subject.

It should not be inferred from this that Mr. Wright's story has the general atmospheric effect of one of Lord Dunsany's tales; nothing would be further from the truth, for his narrative proceeds with a steady and factual air, without obvious attempts to build up an exotic aura, and the masculine restraint of his writing is one of the book's foremost virtues: he everywhere exercises the greatest economy of means and he has a talent for understatement ideally adapted to a subject which treated in more emphatic terms would have all its true values obscured. His depiction of character is of a piece with his prevailing restraint; he seizes on no outstanding idiosyncrasies but allows behavior in the end to reveal as much as can be known.

In a way this is a terrible and pitiless book: to see the most powerful figure of the nineteenth century playing out a Cranford or Trollope drama with all his flagging energies is a horrible sight, but the profundity of the vision that discovers it allows no feeling of maliciousness or cruelty—here is no sneering at or kicking of a man who is down; it is one more able and moving proof that the paths of glory lead but to the grave.

GEOFFREY STONE.

A Proletarian Novel

Talk United States, by Robert Whitcomb. New York: Smith and Haas. $2.00.

THE AMERICAN workingman is appearing more and more in our fiction. He was the coarse rude auto-worker, son of a washwoman, in Jack Conroy's "The Disinherited," the lumber-mill operative in "The Land of Plenty," by Robert Cantwell, the iron-molder in "The Foundry," by Albert Halper. Now, in Robert Whitcomb's first novel, "Talk United States," he is a composite of all these and many others.

His name is Matt Williams. He is mail-handler, transcontinental bum, bricklayer, doughboy, "aristocrat of labor"; then, after the depression, ditch-digger, hobo, hold-up man, and finally, fighting unionist. He tells his own story. He uses his own language. He shows how confused he is and how long it takes him to wake up. Thus the intention behind the book is a good one. But does Matt speak the language of the typical American worker? I think not, because he is too self-conscious. A racy vocabulary indicates nothing. Furthermore, as a character Matt is synthetic. His author is manipulating him throughout his many interesting activities (which, incidentally, are told about rather than depicted convincingly through direct sense-impressions). He comes alive only in occasional conversational passages with his wife, with Slim the stick-up man, with Baldy the revolutionist. Here Mr. Whitcomb is on the periphery of the novelist's task. There is no essential difference between such a novel and an outright social document like Thomas Minehan's "Boy and Girl Tramps of America."

JEROME MELLQUIST.

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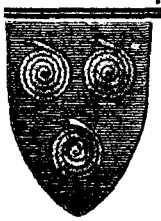
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Briefer Mention

A History of Musical Thought, by Donald N. Ferguson. New York: F. S. Crofts and Company. $5.00

THE TITLE of Professor Ferguson's book is somewhat curious, being desgined to make people wonder when music ever "thought." It is, however, an extraordinarily fine treatise which combines the history of music with some introduction to criticism and appreciation. There is a refreshing clarity, which most works of the same kind lack; and while 500 odd pages cannot supply everything to be got out of larger histories, they do present an abundance of well-digested information in digestible form. It seems to us that here is a really good text upon which a student can rely. The story is brought down to the present day, there being for example a discriminating critique of Schoenberg. As one might expect of such a book, which after all is pedagogical of intent, by far the most space is given to nineteenth-century music, so that the section devoted to earlier choral and melodic forms are somewhat sketchy. The sole fault to be found —unless one is sorely troubled by individualistic interpretation of some details—is with the religous history which Professor Ferguson adopts. With this no Catholic reader will be satisfied.

From Canoe to Steel Barge on the Upper Mississippi, by Mildred L. Hartsough. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press. $3.50.

THIS is a brilliantly written history of the growth and decline of the Upper Mississippi River traffic. At its height, this traffic exceeded all our boat-borne traffic on the Atlantic. The history finally comes up to the present day when a nine-foot channel for accommodating 2,000-ton steel barges is being opened up, and various dams and locks and other improvements on the river which drains the largest valley in the world and connects the most diverse economic empire in the world, are being undertaken by the Upper Mississippi Waterway Association with the outlay of millions of dollars of government money and some private capital. The book is rich with vivid bits of Americana, personalities of the nineteenth-century development of the West and statistics which make an excellent supplement to Mark Twain's classic, "Life on the Mississippi."

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